

**A HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO
BLACK PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SITUATION**

by

HAZEL BUKIWE KAFU

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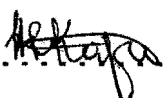
SUPERVISOR: DR. F. J. PRETORIOUS

JUNE 2000

371.192092268 KAFU

Student number: 509-2760

I declare that "A HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT OF BLACKS IN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SITUATION IN THE EASTERN CAPE (1976-1999)" is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE

(MISS H.B. KAFU)

..23 June 2000.....

DATE

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents Sipho and Nokwanda Kafu.

371.192092268 KAFU



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SUMMARY

This study pointed out that without parental involvement in the children's education, the latter cannot fulfil its pre-set goals. The family together with the community, have to contribute a lot to the development and improvement of the education system.

Implications of parental involvement, together with parents, and children's rights was discussed. The latter fact was supplemented with the educational laws of South Africa and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

To determine the problems experienced by teachers in dealing with parents, concerning school related matters, teachers and parents' responses are discussed in this study.

In this study America and Britain have been put as examples as far as parental involvement in children's education is concerned.

It was concluded that the government together with the parents have to take drastic steps to rectify the situation in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape Province.

KEY TERMS

Lack of parental involvement, poor school performance, illiteracy, rural schools, delapidated buildings, overcrowded classrooms, low socio-economic status, unemployment, formal education, traditional tribal life, community involvement.

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CHAPTER 1.A HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT OF BLACKS
IN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SITUATION.1.1 INTRODUCTION.

Lack of parental involvement in the primary and secondary educational situation has caused harm to the education of Blacks in South Africa especially in the rural areas. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Education in the Republic of Transkei (1979:65), reported that there is a gap between the home as a primary education situation, and the school as a secondary education situation. This gap is due to the lack of parental involvement and is chiefly caused by negligence only because some parents are educated and they know what is expected from them. Betela (1990:205) agrees that parents in the former Transkei, as an example of the Black society, do not choose what they want to be taught to their children, they accept what is offered without questioning. The lack of co-operation between teachers and parents hinders the smooth-running of the education system because there is no follow up by the parents concerning their children's progress. (Ngubentombi 1985:411).

1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY.

Education and teaching are embedded in the community hence the collective involvement of parents in a school situation is indispensable. No genuine education can exist without a lasting bond between the parents and the school (Ngubentombi 1985:52).

The aim of this study is to highlight that, without the parental involvement, the education received cannot be in accordance with the demands of the society (Ngubentombi 1985:56). For effective teaching and efficient learning to take place, there should be proper parental involvement and greater parental participation in the education process (Kakana G.L, Ntusi D.N & Nkungu T.M. Commission of enquiry into standard of education in the Republic of Transkei: 1973:37). If the parents understand what is going on at the school, they can contribute vastly towards the learning process of their children as Betela (1989:21) states.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION.

The K.N.N Commission Report (1979:37) reporting on the education of Transkei as an example of a black society, made the following comments:-

"The primary section has high enrolment thus giving 1:121 pupil teacher ratio in rural areas. Parents are not concerned about this

overcrowding because of their low level of education and their non-involvement in school related matters. There is a lack of teaching aids thus making teaching theoretical."

The above report encourages the parents to be involved in the education of their children as it has been indicated that another backlog in the system of education is caused by the parents' non-involvement (K.N.N Commission Report 1973:37).

For example, the following four statements of the K. N . N. Commission (1973:38), deal with the lack of co-operation between the parents and the teachers:

- * Teachers themselves can and should contribute towards improving teachers-parents co-operation (relationships).
- * Teachers cannot act in loco-parentis (in the place of the parents) due to the existing lack of co-operation between themselves and the parents.
- * The improvement of teachers-parents co-operation will also contribute towards the improvement of the physical infrastructure of schools in the rural areas.
- * Improved teachers-parents co-operation will also improve pupil discipline and examination results.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODS.

A literature study and questionnaires were used in this research. The two methods of research will enable the researcher to gather relevant information.

1.4.1 LITERATURE STUDY.

A literature study enabled the researcher to gather information about parental involvement in the primary and secondary schools. The process involved the use of: (i) journals for example: Commission of inquiry into the standard of education in Transkei.(1979) (ii) theses for example: Ngubentombi S.V.S Teacher education in Transkei - a critical and comparative study of the evolution of selected aspects of its administrative, curricular and course structures as an indicator of future policy and planning in the provision of teachers. (1985) (iii) dissertations for example : Bham Hashim: Education and development in the Transkei.(1983) (iv) newspapers for example, Daily Dispatch.

1.4.2 RESEARCH BY MEANS OF QUESTIONNAIRES.

The target groups are the rural population in the remote areas of the former Transkei (see appendix 1 p146). Questionnaires concerning the parental involvement in their children's education, were issued to different rural school principals and to the parents respectively (see appendixes 2&3 p147-148). Principals in rural schools are more exposed to the problem of non-parental involvement in the children's education than those in urban areas.

1.5. DISCUSSION OF THE LITERATURE CONSULTED.

Ngubentombi (1985:410), an educationist, focuses on the former Transkei as an example of a Black society with little parental involvement in the children's education. He gives information about the pupils' poor performance on levels of education from grade one up to the tertiary level. This poor performance is caused by the prevailing lack of parental involvement in the children's education. Administrative problems and weaknesses on the part of the authorities concerned are also a major cause. The examples of these weaknesses are : (i) failure to visit the remote areas by the authorities of the education department and (ii) poor administration in the distribution of funds for the construction of schools in rural areas (Naki 1997 :Aug.25: 4). Bhan Hashim, a researcher who conducted his research in the development of education in the former Transkei, gives a clear description of the latter. Parents fail to look after their children due to poor socio-economic status prevailing in the remote rural areas of the former Transkei. These children ought to be at school but they hang along the road begging from the passing cars for whatever they can get (Hashim 1983:77).

The K.N.N Commission (1973:37) which investigated the problems in the education of the former Transkei, supported the need to improve the relations between the school and parents as well as the need to increase community involvement and support. This Commission discovered that the rural areas were neglected

as far as the distribution of the educational equipments such as science, mathematics and geography kits, were concerned (K.N.N. Commission Report 1973:38).

The research papers on parental involvement which were delivered at a conference of the Institute for Reformational Studies at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in the R.S.A. focused on problems experienced by the black society. Amongst these problems was the lack of parental involvement in their children's education and the low socio-economic status of the parents concerned. The shortages at schools (especially in rural areas) of furniture, prescribed books and very poorly equipped libraries, were discussed at this conference (Educational Challenges in Southern Africa in a Christian-Reformational Perspective 1987: 186-189).

The Taylor Commission, in 1979, revealed many problems relating to the education of the black society such as the lack of interest by black "parents" in the education of their children, "parents" hostility towards schooling and failure to encourage their children to go to school. (Report of the commission of inquiry into education in the Republic of Transkei 1979:65).

1.6. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL IN THE RURAL AREAS AS THE REASON FOR THE LACK OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

The classrooms used in many rural areas reveal that parents have the lowest income. These parents struggle to build the classrooms they can barely afford (see appendix 4: p149).

1.6.1 POVERTY DUE TO UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND ILLITERACY.

As unemployment is rife particularly in the former Transkei, parents struggle even to feed their children. There are times when children go to school without having meals. Hashim (1983:79) is of the opinion that parents in the rural areas are not serious about their children's education. From what he has witnessed, Hashim states that the scarcity of food is due to the wrong methods of cultivating fields which give poor harvest. The low level of education and illiteracy of the parents are the major causes of the inability to use the correct farming methods (Hashim 1983 77).

The majority of parents in rural areas are dropouts themselves and some have never been to school. This makes it very difficult to convince parents about the importance of their children's education (Ngubentombi 1989:56).

Many children are cared for by their grandparents whilst their parents are working far away from their homes. The grand

parents' low income does not cater for all the educational needs of their grand children. Therefore, it shows that poverty, unemployment and illiteracy have a negative effect on the learners' performance (Ngubentombi 1989:57).

1.6.2 HOUSING FACILITIES AND OVERCROWDING IN HOMES.

It seems that the most remote rural areas are the poorest as far as housing is concerned. It is possible that parents, children, aunts and grandparents share a two roomed house and all wash, eat, study and sleep in these two rooms. Hashim (1983:68) reported that overcrowding in homes retards the progress of senior secondary school pupils. The majority of rural senior secondary schools have no hostel facilities. Parents are interested in the child's admission to a school and do not bother themselves about their children's residence afterwards (Hashim 1983:69). The pupils have to look for residential places on their own. A group of more than ten pupils could share one hut without parental supervision. Students do as they please and absent themselves from classes and the latter has resulted in many teenage pregnancies. The owner of the home is only interested in their monthly rentals and has no say in their education (Lefawane:1997: 1 (2):16).

The secondary school pupils who failed in the secondary level, commonly held the notion that there is little time to study at their homes (Taylor Commission 1976:65). The latter is due to the fact that the conditions at their homes are not conducive

to study, as the Taylor Commission (1976:65) has pointed out.

1.6.3 INADEQUATE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL AREAS.

Naki (Aug.1997:4) states that many classrooms in rural areas are built from wattle and daub with no partitions in between. "Rondavel" classrooms are used because of the lack of finances of the parents who contribute towards their erection (see appendixes 5 & 6: p150 & 151). Some rondavels have no roofs because of violent storms. School improvements are a failure in many rural areas due to little parent-teacher co-operation (Booinzaier 1998: 3 (8): 11).

Some schools borrow furniture from the neighbouring schools. It could mean that 170 pupils share 40 desks. A desk designed to sit two pupils sits five pupils. In some pre-schools, pre-primary school children sit on the floor because there is no furniture. This is experienced both at the primary and secondary level (see appendixes 7 & 8 p152-153).

The pupils' grievances in the Eastern Cape, which incorporates the former Transkei, include overcrowding and dilapidated buildings as reported by Naki (1997: 25 Aug. 4). This lack of physical infrastructure has led to the use of some churches as classrooms (see appendix 9 p154). These churches are constructed by the community in rural areas. On Fridays the church has to be emptied of all the school equipments and be re-arranged on Monday, causing much inconvenience to the

teaching process.

There are very few staff rooms and principal's offices. Certain classrooms are being used for administration purposes. Sometimes parents build shacks and prefabricated structures which are used for administration purposes. When it is raining, pupils have to be accommodated in other classrooms because water disrupts the teaching process (see appendix 10 p155).

1.6.4 THE LACK OF SCHOOL COUNSELLORS, INCORPORATING SOCIAL WORKERS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS.

According to the report given at a conference of the Institute for Reformational Studies at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in the R.S.A (1987:187) social workers, psychologists and therapists should be incorporated in all schools to help physically, emotionally, and mentally retarded pupils. However, this is not the case in rural areas. Only the children of the enlightened parents do get special education and others end up uneducated (Ngubentombi 1989:50).

In conclusion, the situation in rural areas is improving at the slowest rate. The government sectors and the authorities concerned do not involve themselves in visiting the remote areas and investigate the major problems experienced by the people. (Mdolomba 1999: March 19: 4). The "generation gap" which occurs between illiterate parents and learned children

will take time to be filled in because of the rate of implementing adult basic education.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS.

1.7.1 ABET: This is the system of education prepared for illiterate and semi-literate people aiming at filling the "generation gap" between the learned children and the illiterate parents.

1.7.2 LOCO-PARENTIS: This is the act of teachers in the place of the parents in the pedagogic situation. It is derived from latin:- loco = meaning in the place of:- parentis = parents (van Rensburg C.J.J & Landman W.A 1979:140).

1.7.3 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: This is an act of including and inviting the parents to participate in all school related matters.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY.

CHAPTER 1.

In this chapter the aims of the study are stated. The problem is formulated and the research methods are clarified. A review of literature is done, terms are clarified and a brief overview of the study as a whole is given.

CHAPTER 2.

Chapter two deals with the implications of parental involvement in South Africa, the role players in the children's education and the importance of parental involvement in the school related matters. Educational laws of South Africa together with parents' and children's rights will be discussed in detail. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa concerning parental involvement will be brought into light. This chapter will conclude by revealing the views of famous educators concerning parental involvement in the education of their children.

CHAPTER 3.

In chapter three, the findings of the researcher will be exposed. A brief overview of black parental involvement will be discussed. Difficulties encountered by teachers in addressing parents about school related matters will be highlighted.

Traditional life styles which are not in accordance with the needs of the formal education will be discussed. Data from parents and rural schools' principals who have experienced the problem of non-parental involvement will be explored.

CHAPTER 4.

In chapter four, the two first world countries that is, Britain and America will be discussed as the examples to be followed as far as the parental involvement in the children's education is concerned.

CHAPTER 5.

5.1 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will conclude by giving a critical evaluation of the study. Finally, recommendations about the future plans to be considered by the ruling government concerning the weak relations between the school and the home and how to strengthen them, will be highlighted.

CHAPTER 2.THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.2.1. INTRODUCTION.

One of the most important factors in a child's success in school is the degree to which his or her parents are actively involved in the child's education. Parents have little knowledge on how to help their children at home, in school and in the community to improve the latter's school performance. However, in this chapter emphasis will be put on implications of parental involvement in the child's academic performance.

2.2 IMPLICATIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Children first learn from their parents as Griffiths and Hamilton (1984:71) state. This learning is most significant in the first five years of life at home than at school in the following ten years. The school should build on the foundation of home education and parents should also be involved in their children's formal education. It is essential, therefore, that parents should make a good choice concerning the schools to be attended by their children (Chapey 1986:51).

Increased parental involvement in the child's formal education helps the child adjust to the new environment, namely, school. The above view is supported by Macfee (1987:185), who asserts

that parental involvement opens doors to meaningful communions with the child's teacher. This is the base of strong home-school relationship.

Meaningful communication also generates better solutions. This is evident when teachers and parents are capable of solving the learners' problems arising within the school situation (Macfee 1987:186).

Parents should be the transmitters and the receivers of communication, and once these communications receive a positive response from parents and teachers, meaningful home-school relationships can be enhanced (Henniger 1986:227).

No school is perfect, as stated by Herr (1987:68), and it should be understood that problems arising should be solved by parents, teachers and the community.

2.3. THE ROLE PLAYERS IN THE PUPILS' PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Parents, teachers, children and the community have their role to play so as to uplift the standard of education.

(i) Parental role in education.

Parental choice of education derives from the basic democratic rights of citizens in a democratic country such as South Africa, as Halstead (1984:102) has stated. Parents choose the

schools their children will attend, expecting high achievements. According to Eipstein (1992:146), the following are the parents' *basic obligations* regarding parental involvement in children's education:- (i) Volunteering through assisting teachers, administrators, and children in the classroom or in other areas of the school. (ii) Attending student performances, sports or other activities, including workshops or other programmes for parents' own education and training. This may lead to stronger parental valuing of education, especially if the parents are involved in setting school goals and priorities. Ryan & Adams et al (1995:86), are of the opinion that parental involvement makes parents more invested in helping their children to reach the expected goals.

All parents are required by the law to be involved in school related matters and a few parents are required to be involved in school governance. This gives the governing bodies a chance of being exposed to the school management and be able to report back to other parents during PTSA meetings. It is during such interconnections as stated by Ryan & Adams et al (1995:87), that parents get all the information concerning monitoring the pupils' homework and other activities such as sports.

To monitor children effectively, parents need to talk to their children about their experience at school. This should be geared towards helping children develop self-monitoring and self-management skills for example the amount of time to be

spent on homework and planning. A sense of autonomy as supported by Ryan & Adams *et al* (1995:89), should be developed to achieve the above mentioned skills. Movement towards adolescence needs a developed sense of autonomy whilst children enjoy the protection and guidance of parents. When parents exert firm control over their children, and establish clear standards for their behaviour it becomes most effective when combined with warmth and responses towards the child.

Parents who have a strong desire to influence school programmes and activities should be included in school conferences which enhance parent-teacher-pupil relationship.

(ii) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION.

The community has a role to play in the education of children, as Eipstein (1982:85-102) has speculated. He goes on to say that business, cultural organisations and sports associations should share the responsibility for children's education and future success. This includes financial support so that a lot of school equipment and activities can be financed. The norms and standards set by the community members will have an impact upon the growing child. If the community has a history of gangsterism, gangsters will be bred in that community, but if it sets good norms and standards, the younger generation will follow suit (Chapey 1986:7).

(iii) THE ROLE OF LEARNERS TOWARDS THEIR EDUCATION

Children must be obedient to their parents and teachers for the effectiveness of the education process. Because of their uniqueness, as agreed upon by Griffiths & Hamilton (1984:50), children need to be treated with great care and be supported by parents in all their different needs.

Children should learn to be responsible from the earliest stages of their lives because the education process needs a lot of responsibility. This, according to Schneider and Coleman (1993:13), will enable the children to reach the pre-set goals without much difficulty. There are children with learning problems, behaviour problems, visually and aurally impaired and physically handicapped children who need to be placed in accordance with their special needs. Great care and relevant placement of these children will offer them good chances of helping and correcting their problems for their benefit in the society in future.

Helping children with the above mentioned problems, according to Griffiths and Hamilton (1984:54), needs different schemes which will be able to cater for these children's financial support.

2.4 WHY PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT TO CHILDREN AND TEACHERS?

Parental involvement is important to children because the

latter get encouragement when fully supported. By emphasizing schooling, children can gain personal and academic development (Eipstein 1987:119). Parental encouragement and participation in schools and classroom activities has a positive effect on children's achievements, attitudes and aspirations even if the parents' socio-economic status is not high.

Children's success in school depends greatly upon the family's capability to assist the child with homework. Parents can engage themselves in talking about current school experiences during PTA meetings where children have to tell their parents about what they have experienced at school. (Schneider & Coleman 1993:96). Restrictions of television on weekdays may also have positive impact on the children's study habits as they cannot be interrupted by viewing television when expected to do their homework and studies. After school supervision by parents can increase the child's interest of carrying on with the school work irrespective of being out of school grounds. This interest can be adversely affected by the parent's absence during late hours because many parents are studying and others are busy with their part-time jobs.

Parental involvement is important to *teachers* because it enables the latter to interact with the former. Working with parents as volunteers improves the school situation and its programs as Eipstein (1987:125) has cited. Such improvements enable the teachers to ask parents to conduct learning activities such as maths improvement with their children at home. School administrators get the chance of extending the

number of parents active at school by encouraging all active parents to be volunteers. Parents can be canvassed to learn if and when they want to help at school or at home resulting in the provision of an annual account of parental resources available to teachers (Eipstein 1987:125).

The above facts can open the opportunity of inviting parents to visit children's classrooms, observe the classroom activities, talk to the child's teacher and help at school during their vacations. When parental involvement is well organised, better educational services to the students are provided as stated by Griffiths & Hamilton (1984:24). As the school has an obligation of informing parents about school programmes, advising parents on how to help children at home can acquaint parents with some of the principles of good teaching. Learning activities at home may be co-ordinated and directed by the teacher during parent-teacher associations. The above fact refers to the teachers' requests and instructions for parents to assist at home with learning activities that are directed and related to the children's classwork (Eipstein 1987:126).

Principal leadership is particularly important for the teachers' development of workshops for parents. Parental workshops use the school's resources, including classrooms where the workshops would be conducted and materials to be used. Parents are provided with skills on how to tutor their children in specific subjects (Eipstein 1987:127). This ensures the use of parents as partners in their children's

education. Parental involvement will create positive ideas such as the development of the school whenever the need arises.

Students whose teachers and parents use frequent parent involvement practices, develop a positive attitude towards the school. More regular homework habits, familiarity between the teacher and their parents, and ability to do school work even during weekends without being reprimanded, are envisaged (Eipstein 1987:128). Parents become involved in helping with school work so much that some help their children with or without the instructions from the teachers. Administrators, direct and support policies and practices that affirm parents' roles as partners with teachers in their children's education and support teachers' initiatives for using parents as resources for improving students' skills.

2.5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS, TEACHERS AND AUTHORITIES REGARDING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

(i) Parents.

Parents have the following responsibilities towards their children :

- (i) Providing food, clothing and shelter.
- (ii) Assuring health and safety.
- (iii) Providing child rearing and home training.
- (iv) Providing school supplies and place for school work.
- (v) To build positive home conditions for learning (Eipstein

1987:13).

Concerning the supplies for school work, parents have to provide their children with money for all their school requirements. Financial and material resources as advocated by Schneider and Coleman (1993:13), differ from family to family. Some parents enjoy a high socio-economic status and provide their children with the best education they can afford. Those from the low socio-economic status are at a disadvantage sometimes because good and quality education is expensive (Carlisle:1998 21 Oct. 3).

As it is the parents' responsibility to train children at home, some parents as stated by Schneider and Coleman (1993:24), leave their children unsupervised because of spending more time employed outside their homes. This used to be typical of single mothers but currently, children from married couples are experiencing the same trauma of being left with relatives, grandparents or alone. Children cannot progress well at school if they are undernourished. The latter fact is a result of rife unemployment, especially in the rural areas (Booinzaier:1998: 3 (8): 11). Parents have to nourish their children to ensure good health because undernourishment contributes to the child's being less co-operative at school.

Health and safety play the most important role in the process of educating children. Educational goals cannot be reached if the child's health is at stake. Children with poor health experience repeated failure in their academic field. It is the

duty of parents as mentioned by Herr (1981:33), to assure that their children are safe wherever they are.

Parents are responsible for purchasing the school uniforms required at school, provide shelter for their children which includes enough space to have privacy for their studies and completing their homework. Overcrowded homes, as stated by Vorster and de Meillon (1991:126), are a result of economic pressure and because of inadequate or unobtainable housing.

(ii) TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITY.

Teachers act in loco-parentis in the secondary education situation with the ultimate aim of meaningful and responsible adulthood (Du Plooy and Kilian 1984:36). Teachers have a task of advising pupils about choices of courses they wish to follow and how these are connected to different careers which are in great demand. Teachers have to indicate to parents and children during PTSA meetings, the value of the subjects they teach and the career possibilities they open up (Vorster & de Meillon 1991:38).

It is of tremendous importance for the teacher to know each pupil and his/her background. Many rural schools in South Africa as reported by Cruickshank (1996 1 (4): 16), are overcrowded and the teachers cannot offer any individual attention. The teachers must be able to identify children with special needs. These include mentally retarded, the hard of

hearing, the deaf, the blind, those with speech defects and those with neurological defects (Kapp 1989:23). The importance of identifying these children with special needs is to place them in the stream of education relevant and suitable for their needs. Inability to identify children with special problems leads to their delaying progress as they would be instructed in the mainstream education where their special needs are not provided for (Kapp 1989:23).

Many parents cannot identify disability problems in their children, but teachers can help by advising parents about what to do with children with special needs. While the teacher should be able to offer orthodidactic help in his class, he/she must be certain whether other handicaps or impairments need specialists such as orthopedagogues to help children with behavioral problems or not (Kapp 1989:24).

Being familiar with the child's background will also help the sociopedagogue to know the domestic problems which usually hamper the child's progress. As parents cannot advise their children alone, a careers' counsellor can be approached to help the pupils with their choices (Vorster & de Meillon 1991:39).

2.6. BODIES REGULATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Parent Teacher Students Associations, Teachers Involve Parents in School, Parent Teacher Organisations and Parent Teacher

Associations are the bodies which regulate parental involvement in South African schools. Without their presence, as there are such cases, parental involvement is impossible thus hampering the child's progress in the learning process.

(i) Parent-Teacher-Associations

In South Africa, many schools have PTSAs which are responsible for the smooth running of the school, and especially seeing to it that parents play their role in the education of their children.

The administrators and principals have to see to it that organisational effectiveness is prevailing in these associations as cited by Eipstein (1982:134). Superintendents and principals can also play an important leadership support role in the development of all types of effective parental involvement. They can be co-ordinators in parental workshops where parents are trained on how to help children with their school work at home.

(ii) Teachers involve parents in schools.

Teachers Involve Parents in School work is another body which assists teachers who want to increase parental involvement in special subjects such as Maths and Science (Teacher's column 1999 3 (4): 2). Administrators and teachers can exercise leadership to assure that materials designed satisfy specific

goals for parental involvement and are appropriate for the students' skills and parents' understanding (Eipstein 1995:133).

Resources and evaluation to determine the strengths and weaknesses of school programmes for parental involvement can also be provided by the principals, administrators and superintendents.

Administrators should help their staff in identifying the main goals for parental involvement especially those that will guide the development over several years of a comprehensive programme for parental involvement (Eipstein 1995:133).

(iii) Parent-Teacher-Organisations and Associations

Parent Teacher Organisations and Associations should be active in school improvement plans, helping in revising school policies, programmes, curricula and budgets. These bodies, as stated by Eipstein (1987:160), should participate in selection of new principal, teachers, or staff. Their role is needed in many school-related activities mandated by state funded programmes such as Non-Governmental organisations who train personnel to teach the reception classes (Eipstein 1987:130).

Grade level has the most influence on teachers' uses of parent involvement in learning activities at home and on parents' feelings of confidence about helping their children. It is

advisable for first grade teachers to make more frequent use of parent involvement than teachers of other grades. Involving more parents, more often and more productively requires, according to Eipstein (1987:156), changing the major location of parental involvement from the school to the home. This includes the change of emphasis from general policies to specific skills as well as changing the major target from the general population of students or school staff to the individual child at home (Eipstein 1987:165).

(iv) INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY GROUPS.

These are self directed reviewers who, according to Schneider Coleman (1993:117), provide the community with information about schools and all issues that affect education. Independent advocacy groups offer workshops and courses on classroom processes, home evaluation procedures by parents and staff development opportunities. They work as watchdogs against discrimination in special education and are involved in co-operative efforts for school improvement.

2.7 PARENTS' RIGHTS REGARDING THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN.

Parents as citizens and legal guardians of their children have *social and legal rights* over the education of their children.

(i) Social rights of parents regarding their children's education.

Good parent-teacher interaction is a key to strong relationship building. According to the report given by Henniger (1987:266), these relationships are stronger when both parties understand and agree on their respective rights. Parents have several social rights that influence the educational process. Amongst these, are the right:

- (a) to own feelings about their children's place in the system of education.
- (b) to authority at home.
- (c) to meaningful communications with the child's teacher.
- (d) to plan and maintain parent groups.

(Henniger 1987:226-229).

(a) The right to have a choice concerning their children's placement in the system of education.

Parents have been exposed to different schools and have a wide variety of experience which brings each parent to a unique set of feelings about educational system and parent school relations. Parents know their children better than anybody else and they are able to perceive their children's needs better than anyone else. This fact, according to Henniger (1987:227), entitles the parents the right to own their feelings about the most appropriate placement of their

children in school. An example here is that they are entitled to opinions on the retention or acceleration of their children from one grade to the next.

Their feelings about the placement of children in special classrooms is another example of their right. With the guidance of highly trained personnel, parents may have an active role in the placement of their handicapped children in an appropriate educational setting. Not everything that parents want may be possible or practical because of financial limitations and this problem, according to Kapp (1989:24), may be discussed with school personnel who may reveal that some requests are possible, and others are not, within the existing realities of the school environment.

(b) Right to authority in the home.

The home is the parents' place where they have to control their children according to their culture. Disciplinary methods, routines and general behaviour exhibited at home are the parents' responsibility. Schools, as Henniger (1987:227) reports, should not interfere in an area in which they are not wanted. Suggestions and comments should only be made to parents on their request, thus respecting parents' sovereignty.

(c) Rights to meaningful communications with the child's teacher.

Parents should expect, and receive the opportunity to communicate openly with their children's teachers because effective communications are the building blocks of strong home-school relationships. A variety of communication avenues should be open so that parents and teachers can discuss many problems that occur because the former, as stated by Henniger (1987:227), generate better solutions to a problem. For communications to be effective, parents should be receivers and transmitters so as to enhance the success of meaningful home-school relationships.

(d) The Right to plan and maintain parent groups.

The parent groups provide an opportunity to socialise, discuss child-rearing problems and successes, defining effective ways of dealing with children together with clarifying parental feelings about policies and procedures of the school.

The above functions provide additional opportunities for the involvement of parents in the educational process. Schools should encourage parent groups and respect them so that they make important contributions to the school activities (Henniger 1987:228). Effective quality leadership guarantees the smooth functioning of parent groups. Parents have to support and develop leadership capabilities in themselves and

other people, taking part in the wide variety of leadership activities, thus ensuring highly successful parent groups (Henniger 1987:227).

2.7.1 LEGAL RIGHTS.

Legislative action and legal proceedings are amongst several rights available to parents. Parents have the right to :

- (a) the school's policies and programme plans.
 - (b) understand and evaluate techniques of the school as they relate to the child.
 - (c) to be represented in policy making decisions.
 - (d) access to special services for children with special problems.
 - (e) privacy, protection and due process as defined by law
- (Henniger 1987:229).

(a) The Right to know the school's policies and programme plans.

Parents should have written information on the school's policies and programme plans which would help them understand the school functions and their roles within the school.

Having knowledge about the functioning of the school will help parents to support these policies and explain them to their children who sometimes have difficulty in adjusting themselves to some of the school policies (Henniger 1987:228). Parents

are free to change school policies if they find them difficult to support (Government Gazette 1996:41).

(b) The Right to understand evaluative techniques of the school as they relate to the child.

Parents need to be informed about the evaluative techniques in-order to understand them because they have a strong influence in the lives of their children. As Herr (1981:87) argues, the knowledge of the general effects of evaluation and the strengths and weaknesses of the techniques used, enable parents to work effectively with their children through counselling, support and praising them.

Children should be taught to understand and adjust themselves to positive and negative aspects of evaluations. It is the schools' responsibility to familiarise children with different evaluation techniques, but parents at home should supplement and reinforce it (Henniger 1987:228).

(c) The Right to be represented in policy-making decisions.

Parents should be actively involved in policy-making decisions so as to understand all educational programmes. The reason for the schools existence, according to Henniger (1987:228), is to serve parents and families so that they are represented in the policy-making decisions of the school. The parents' participation is expected on schoolboards, advisory boards,

policy councils and many policy-making bodies related to school activities. Parents should sacrifice time, energy and talents so as to get involved in the schools' decision-making process (Henniger 1987:228).

(d) The Right of access to special services for children with special problems.

Children with special needs seem to be neglected by some societies because they are not provided with all the requirements relevant to their handicap (Coetzer & le Roux 1996: 25 (1&2) :84). Parents, according to the report given by Henniger (1987:228-229), have the right to request and receive special services to meet the needs of their handicapped children. The most important aspect is that parents should be responsible and co-operate with the schools in the placement of their children. Working together with the teachers in special schools through open communication, can open chances for the most desirable educational services for the children (Kapp 1989:24).

Medical records, test results and many materials which are helpful in designing special programmes for the children should always be available to speed up all their requirements.

(e) The Right to protection, privacy and due process as defined by law.

Parents as guardians have a right to safeguard their children's privacy for the purpose of protection. Schools according to Henniger (1987:229), are not allowed to release private information about students who are under 18 years of age without the parents' consent. Education for all handicapped children guarantees them the same protection from discrimination and the rights available to other individuals (Kapp 1989:25).

The laws clarify important rights to be exercised by parents for their dependents. This requires care by the parents to avoid exercising these rights injudiciously. As Henniger (1987:229) puts it, parents need to accept the responsibility to use these rights to benefit their children. Parents should act as agents for significant changes in the lives of their children.

Lastly, parents are given both social and legal rights which need to be recognised by teachers and schools. When both teachers and parents are aware of the rights and responsibilities, co-operation between home and school becomes possible. According to Herr (1981:84-85), children's learning opportunities can be enhanced if parents take the custody and control of their children's activities at home and at school.

2.7.2 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REGARDING EDUCATION.

Children are the focal point in the education situation. For the smooth running of the education system, the following children's rights should be recognised:

- (a) The Right to basic education.
- (b) The Right to further education.
- (c) The Right to academic freedom.

(a) The Right to basic education.

According to the document released by the Department of Education, Potgieter et al (1997:5), are of the opinion that the children have the right to basic education. The state must do all that it can to ensure that every child receives basic education. Enough schools, trained personnel, school equipment and good standards of education should be maintained.

Schools may not discriminate against pupils and deny students access to any information related to their education. The latter issue is complex because it is not easy to achieve in practice, especially in South Africa as it is. Pupils in many rural schools are denied the privilege of getting information from the education department (Squelch & Bray 1996:158).

Street children have the right to special attention in education and health care. Communities and families have a duty to protect their children from becoming homeless and

abandoned. All children have a right to free comprehensive health services in schools, including screening diseases, physical and psychological treatment and services. They have a right to adequate health care and medical attention before and after birth (Squelch & Bray 1996:30).

(b) The Right to further education.

Children residing in the Republic of South Africa have a right to further education through the developed education system so that further education becomes available and accessible to everyone (Potgieter et al 1997:6).

(c) The right to academic freedom.

Academic freedom as reported in the National Commission on Higher education (1996:33), refers to individual rights to choose subjects one wants to study according to his/her chosen career. This includes accountability and responsibility of what he/she has chosen, meaning that it is freedom for responsibility. Learners have the right not to be punished or treated in a cruel inhuman or degrading manner as stipulated in R.S.A Constitution (1996:section 12). The constitution goes on to state that it is illegal for any person to apply corporal punishment to learners at a public or private school.

2.8 EDUCATIONAL LAWS IN SOUTH AFRICA REGARDING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION.

The Bill of Rights supports the opinion that it is the parents' duty to ensure that their children attend school daily and play a role in supporting a positive learning environment at their children's schools.

(i) School fees.

The Government Gazette (1997:41) stipulated that parents have a major role to play towards their children's education. Financing their children at school is one of these roles, failing which, legal action should be taken against such parents. It is the parents' responsibility to decide at the meetings how fees should be charged and the governing body should act according to the parents' approval (Government Gazette 1997:40).

(ii) Partnership with all stakeholders interested in education.

Co-operation between all stake-holders who have an interest in education, parents being mentioned amongst those, should prevail within the education situation. Effective partnership, as stipulated in the Government Gazette (1997:9), should promote good teamwork, shared decision-making, shared goals and values, respect for the roles of different partners and

mutual trust and respect.

2.9 THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 amended act 200 of 1993. The Bill of Rights declares the right to freedom of expression, association, security, human dignity and access to information, and parents, children and teachers are subject to the following:

(i) Freedom of expression.

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression such as the freedom to receive or impart information or ideas as parents have to do, thus involving themselves in school related matters (The constitution of R.S.A 1996:9).

(ii) Freedom of association.

Every individual has freedom to artistic creativity, scientific research and association, for example, where the parents have the right to associate themselves with the school governing bodies. Parent teacher associations have to be formed to build strong ties between teachers and parents (The constitution of R.S.A 1996:11).

(iii) Access to information from the Department of Education.

Parental rights to information governing the school authorities and any information held by the state is guaranteed in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:15).

(iv) Human dignity.

Everyone's dignity has to be respected and protected irrespective of colour, race, creed and sex. Parents ought to be respected and treated with great honour whenever they visit the school (The constitution of the R.S.A 1996:16).

(v) Learners' rights to parental care.

All learners have the right to family or parental care. If the child has been removed from the family environment, the child should be subjected to appropriate alternative care such as primary health care.

Parents are bound to support their children nutritionally, find shelter for them and offer basic health services. Parents have to protect children from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation (The constitution of the R.S.A 1996:13). Children should be protected from explosive labour practices that are inappropriate for a person under the age of eighteen.

According to the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:13), it is the children's right not to be detained, and except as a last resort. Further, children under the age of 18 years must be kept separate from detainees. They should be protected in times of armed conflict and their best interests are of utmost importance in every matter concerning them (The constitution of R.S.A 1996:13).

Children have the right not to be abused, to be secured, to be supported and to get appropriate social assistance as the bill of rights of the Republic of South Africa (1996:13) has stipulated. Children have the right to be subjected to just administrative action by being reasonably and fairly punished when they have committed an offence. All children have the right to receive education in an official language of their choice in all public schools. For this right to be effectively implemented, the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:14), advises the state to consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions. Equity, practicability, the need to redress the results of the past racially discriminatory laws and practices should be taken into account.

(vi) Language and cultural rights.

Children may not be denied the cultural right to mix with the members of their community, i.e. they should enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language as put

clearly in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:15). These rights may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights. A recognised sign language has the status of an official language for the purposes of learning at a public school.

Representative councils of learners at school must be established at all public schools. Guidelines for the establishment of the learners' council as quoted in the Government Gazette Act 84 (1996:10), is determined by the MEC of the province concerned.

The MEC of the province may exempt a public school for learners in special schools from complying with the election of the representative council of learners if it is not practically possible for this council of learners to be established at the school (The Government Gazette Act 84 1996:10).

(vii) Expulsion from public schools.

A learner at a public school may be expelled only if found guilty of serious misconduct, such as involvement in drug trafficking, after a hearing by the school governing council. Subject to the hearing, a learner or the learners' parents may appeal against the decision of the Head of Department to the MEC as the Government Gazette (1996:4) has stipulated.

If a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance is expelled from school, the Head of the Department must make an alternative arrangement at school.

(viii) Freedom of assembly and association.

Learners' right to freedom of assembly are protected in the Bill of Rights (1996:16) which stipulates that every person shall have the right to assemble and demonstrate with others peacefully, unarmed and present petitions.

(ix) The right to privacy and confidentiality.

Teachers are in possession of confidential information on students. The interests of the student should be protected by not revealing any confidential information to other people. Confidential information may only be revealed to the learners' parents (Squelch & Bray 1996:164).

(x) Religious freedom.

Society's norms and values should be instilled in students by the educators at school, building on the parents' foundation. Because of multicultural and multifaith nature of South Africa, it becomes difficult for the educators to decide on norms and values to be instilled (Squelch & Bray 1996:159).

Attendance is not compulsory to religious education and

worship despite the fact that these two form the part of the formal curriculum. Educators need to be sensitive to the students' religious rights and freedom and avoid violating them. Squelch and Bray (1996:160) advise the educators to develop programmes and activities that recognise the rights of students and that promote religious diversity and tolerance of various beliefs and practices.

(xi) Safety of students at school.

The constitution of the R.S.A (1996:13) contains rights that are applicable to the safety of students in the school environment. Students should feel safe and secure and should be trained not to be violent so as to avoid dangerous situations. Extra care should be taken by principals and the governing bodies that they supervise and take care of students whilst at school.

2.10 SOME FAMOUS EDUCATORS' VIEWS ABOUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Many centuries ago famous educators were the proponents of parental involvement in their children's education. They discovered the benefits of including the parents in all school activities and this is of utmost importance even nowadays.

(i) JOHN DEWEY. (1859-1952)

Dewey is of the opinion that growing children are influenced

and exposed to the adults' experiences, parents being the founders of all the knowledge contained in the child.

Verster et al (1991:23), stated Dewey suggested parental involvement in their children's education to support the individual emotionally, physically, and importantly intellectually. Dewey believed that the child's becoming depends on the need for others, parents being the first and foremost amongst these (Verster et al 1991:23). Parents have to instil in their children the desire for continued development in all spheres of life.

Dewey is of the opinion that education implies learning to live and that the child can be able to do so through the accompaniment of his parents who will help him to adapt to his/her environment because education means learning to adapt (Verster et al 1991:55). According to Dewey parents should help their children to organise experiences which will be fruitful and creative to adulthood.

(ii) J.L. DU PLOOY. (1910-)

Du Plooy agreed that parents have to intervene in the child's way en-route to adulthood, by stating that effective dialogical intervention of parents in the life of dependent who is in need of assistance, guides the latter in a proper, exemplary and instructive manner towards adulthood (Landman 1981:304). Du Plooy emphasized the fact that the family should

constitute the basis of all education whereby parents meet all their children's educational needs.

He held the view that the child is created not for his/her parents but to serve the community. He encouraged the parental involvement as far as the school activities are concerned so that the child's potential and talents are developed (Verster et al 1991:60).

(iii) M.J. LANGEVELDT (1905-)

As reported by Du Plooy and Killian (1984:98), Langeveldt realized that parents as primary educators influence the child to progress in a certain direction. The child, according to this educationist, is willing to assume what adulthood implies if parents endeavour a constructive partnership of social life through displaying values, norms and standards acceptable to the society. Parents leave a living example of their conduct which is marked by self-responsibility and self-determination. In his writing, parents have the right to supervise and assist their children in their daily existence (Du Plooy and Killian 1984:99).

(iv) W.A. LANDMAN (1923-)

Landman alleges that the aim of education is to make a success of educative assistance whereby the parents play a major role in assisting the child towards meaningful adulthood (Du Plooy

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& Killian 1984:99). Adulthood is marked by meaningful existence, human dignity, decision-making, responsibility and norm identification. The latter conditions, according to Landman & Gous (1969:80), can only be achieved if the parents as adults, act as role models to the child because the norm image of adulthood is the pedagogic destination of each child.

Parents as adults must embody and portray the image of adulthood as the child is subjected to openness, future awareness and possibility. This means the child is involved in the act of becoming and gradually assuming the state of becoming a responsible adult through limited freedom (Du Plooy & Killian 1984:100).

(v) C.K. OBERHOLZER. (1904-1983)

This educationist indicates that parents must redundantly avail themselves in the education situation to such an extent that they can entrust their children to life. (Du Plooy & Killian 1984:100). The child appeals to the adult because he has no experience about life and its demands. The parent as an adult will respond willingly so that the child realises how to improve and ennoble his own way of life. Gradually the child gains insight into what he must do and say. By learning to answer many questions, his appeals become few thus revealing the sign of becoming an adult (Du Plooy & Killian 1984:101).

(vi) P. VAN ZYL. (1916-)

Education as cited by Van Zyl (1973:198) is the creation of a living space where the parent as an adult has to exemplify recognised values in his society. This famous educationist goes on to say that the aim of education must be geared to the aim of life which reveals whether man lives meaningfully or meaninglessly. Parents, according to Van Zyl (1973:199), should abstain from confining the lifetask to adulthood and give assistance to the child purely on the grounds of what is expected of an adult. The educators and parents who make this mistake are violating the human aspect of the adult-to-be by neglecting to allow that chance of being a child. Educators and parents, according to Van Zyl (1973:201), educate children in the light of one's personal view of man and according to that educator's philosophy of life.

(vii) S.V.S. NGUBENTOMBI (1949-)

The child belongs to all the adult members of the community into which he/she is born. The duty of adults is to cherish and correct the child. Every adult member of the community is an approved educator and is expected to act under the demands of the tribal ethos in rearing the young (Ngubentombi 1985:33). The mother of the child has all the important contact in life, that is, the former is concerned with the latter's needs and well-being. Sisters and grandmothers play their role in educating the child by teaching the latter the ways of behaving and all the household chores (Ngubentombi 1985:34). The boy learns from a wide range of male members

ranging from the father, male relatives and playmates. Knowledge, according to Ngubentombi (1985:34), is not passed in an artificial situation, but learning is by means of imitation. The child learns the skills and tasks required by adults by doing them.

(viii) PESTALOZZI. (1746-1827)

This educationist viewed the family as the centre of all education, the mother being understanding and loving. Giving a report about Pestalozzi, Verster et al (1981:128) stated that this educationist believed that the baby learns about love at his mother's breast. The love the child gets from the parents helps him/her to develop his/her moral character and his/her entire development. The emotional safety of a loving family nurtures the child's spontaneity and self-employment. At home the child must have a sense of belonging to avoid emotional problems. Pestalozzi wanted the school as the complement to the family, to be similar to home circumstances thus making it the second home for the child. The state, according to Pestalozzi as reported by Verster et al (1991:129), is a larger family which should be governed according to the family principles, that is love and justice. Pestalozzi considered the family as the ideal locale for education. He encouraged parents to play with their children and strongly condemned the practice of leaving small children in the care of servants.

Leaving the child in the care of the servants was regarded as

an act of exposing the child to negative influences during his most sensitive years (Verster et al 1991:129). The parental couple should share the responsibility of tutoring children at home whenever they bring school activities which need to be done.

As an advocate of the family, he regarded parents as the primary teachers of the nation because their ideals and views, especially the mothers, are of paramount importance. He understood that the educational function of the school supplements that of the parents. According to Pestalozzi, the teacher has to strive for a bond of love, trust and sympathy between himself and the child. The teacher's loving attitude encourages enthusiasm in the child. He regarded the teachers and the parents as sources of authority within the process of education (Verster et al 1991:112).

(x) JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU. (1712-1778)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is reported by Verster et al (1982:128) as an educationist who considered the family to be the ideal locale for education. Parents were always warned by Rousseau, about children's needs for help, especially with their school activities. The ability to do their work thoroughly, depends upon their parents' loving care. Rousseau urged mothers to establish close contact with their children up to the age of five by suckling the children, bathing them and playing with them.

The act of leaving children with servants was strongly condemned by Rousseau because the child will be exposed to negative influences during his/her young and tender age. (Verster et al 1982:128). The father has to give necessary guidance especially towards the boy's education, and the latter should be entrusted to the former throughout his entire life. If it happens that the servant is employed to educate the child, this servant must protect the child as his/her parents would. The servants and the parents together must protect the child against negative influences, supervise the healthy development of his/her body and senses, thus setting him a worthy example in acquiring a sense of duty.

Parents should never force their children to do what they have prescribed for them, but should guide and allow limited freedom as far as the children's choices are concerned (Verster et al 1982:128).

(xi) T.S. MWAMWENDA. (1945-)

Mwanwenda is of the opinion that parents who are warm, caring and responsible to children's needs are modelled more than those who fail to display the previously mentioned qualities (Mwanwenda 1995:58). The children's learning is positively affected by the parents' and teachers' relationships with them. Once parents get closer to their children, the latter identify and adopt the formers' values, personality traits and beliefs. Mwanwenda (1995:210) agrees that a great deal of

learning occurs when parents interact with their children, as far as the school work is concerned.

2.11 CONCLUSION.

From the views of the different educationists concerning parental involvement, it is clear that the teacher and the parent are occupied with an extremely important role in the educational events. Parents have a special duty towards, and share in the education of their children.

The child who is led to adulthood by both parties grows towards consciousness of values which are not generated by prescriptions but by good examples. For this reason, it is important for the child to experience the living example as the image and norm of adulthood. As stipulated in the schools' act (1996), educational reality should serve to prove the possibility of employing the child's conscience as a guideline to what is good or evil, and of using education to actualise the capacity for choice and the acceptance of the norms of propriety.

It is important for every educator and parent to scrutinise the quality of his relationship with those children entrusted to him. The relationship of understanding, authority and trust form the cornerstone of education. Should sound relationships of this kind be lacking, the pupil may sustain incalculable and irreparable harm.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF BLACK PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSKEI
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RURAL AREAS (1976-1999).

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

Politically, the former Republic of Transkei got self-government from the then Republic of South Africa in 1963. The Department of Education, according to Ngubentombi (1977:80), was incorporated into the Republic of Transkei. Blacks had to prove that they could uplift the standard of their education as the gap, concerning the quality of education, was becoming bigger between the education of Blacks and that of the Whites (Behr 1934:13-29).

The cause of this difference, according to Betela (1989:22), was that formal education is mainly of western origin and it was introduced to the Blacks without considering the relevance it would have to the developing countries, their culture and world view.

In rural areas, illiteracy is the major problem. The Report of Enquiry into education in the Republic of Transkei (1979:69) reported that people could neither write nor sign their names when visiting the government offices.

The literacy programmes introduced in rural areas for illiterate parents have many problems which delay the process

of introducing adult literacy. The examples of those problems are discussed on page 4.

3.2 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA (1970-1999).

South Africa as a multicultural society, has different types of schools, e.g urban and rural schools. Amongst the latter types of schools are farm schools for farm workers, private schools and public schools for those who cannot afford private education (Behr 1934:13).

3.2.1 Black Societies.

(a) Urban Areas.

Parental involvement in Black schools differs according to the level of parents' knowledge about what prevails at school (Nyati 1984:87). Parents in urban areas are much more involved in their children's education due to literacy, better wages, housing and other facilities.

(b) Parental involvement in rural areas.

According to Ngubentombi (1989:13), over 70% of Black South Africans live in rural areas. The difference noticed between the rural and urban schools according to Naude (1984:183) is caused by the prevalent illiteracy in rural areas and the

higher standard of education achieved by black parents in the urban areas. Those who have achieved better level of education in the rural areas moved to the urban areas because of the better living and more opportunities. Parental involvement in the rural areas has to be encouraged by educating adults who do not understand what role to play in the formal education system.

3.2.2 THE WHITE POPULATION.

In 1652 when the Dutch first settled at the Cape, education, as stated by Behr (1934:15), was introduced through an examination of the religious qualifications of the teachers. Sick comforters were the first teachers who had to adhere strictly to the doctrines of the Reformed Church (Behr 1934:17). As from 1812 parental bodies who were responsible for the education of the children were already in place. School committees, as Behr (1934:19) maintains, developed under the parental bodies to work together for the education of the child.

3.2.3 COLOURED POPULATION.

Coloureds are concentrated in the western districts of the Cape, almost half of the total population of Cape Town. Very few Coloureds are to be found in all towns and townships all over South Africa (Behr 1934:155).

Naude (1983:152) discovered that there was a lack of contact between the home and the school in the Coloured communities because of the non-existence of parent-teacher organisations and school committees. The above problem prevailed in backward Coloured communities where irregular school attendance and behaviour problems prevailed. In some areas, such as in the Cape Flats, the pupil-teacher ratio was 100:1 making individualisation of instruction impossible. Some parts of the syllabi, as investigated by Naude (1983:155), were not in accordance with the nature and mode of life of the Coloured child and the parents' educational level affected the child's school progress.

Parents who were concerned about their children's education provided a higher order of intellectual stimulation and a healthier environment within the Coloured communities (Naude 1983:183). Large Coloured families lead to poverty and overcrowding due to poor housing facilities and financial problems.

3.2.4 THE ASIATIC POPULATION

Asiatics form 2,4% of the total population of South Africa. Of the above percentage, 97% are Indians and their education is not as disadvantaged as that of Blacks (Behr 1977:154). Asiatics' parents have responsibilities and are actively involved in the education of their children.

3.3 THE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS IN THE TRANSKEI IN MOTIVATING PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL RELATED MATTERS.

The adult schools for illiteracy as indicated by the Education Department of the former Republic of the Transkei (1979:19) need to be organised and supervised thoroughly for the benefit of the illiterate parents all over Transkei. Currently there are inspectors to ascertain that adult schools are run in an appropriate manner (Morwamohube:1997:1 (2):16).

(i) Poor attendance of parent's meetings.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Standard of Education in the Republic of Transkei (1973:43), emphasised the need to continue improving relations between school, parents and community and increasing community involvement and support.

Attendance of parents' meetings is very poor and male participation is becoming far less than expected due to working far from homes. Poor meeting attendance caused the teachers not to be able to stimulate active participation and interest on the part of each parent in the educational achievements of the child, as stated by Sitole (1993:9).

It is through parents themselves that their support for the school can be elicited. Reluctant parents, as Nyati (1984:87) puts it, can be encouraged to keep in contact with the school by forming parent-teacher-organisations where parents can be

free to express their opinions concerning the functioning of the school. The latter fact can be encouraged because many parents do not even know the teachers of their local schools attended by their children.

As Transkei is predominantly rural, means of communication are poor. If written letters informing parents about a meeting are not sent in time, poor meeting attendance result. The absence of many parents delays the progress of the issues to be discussed and implemented (Nyati 1984:85).

Volunteering by parents through assisting in some learning areas is unheard of in rural areas, due to illiteracy, working far away from home and being busy with house-hold chores. Teachers have a task of convincing parents about a decision making role in the parent-teacher associations and organisations in the rural societies which have parent-teacher organisations (Ntikinca 1994:89).

In many rural societies, parent-teachers' organisations and parent-teacher-student associations do not exist (Naude 1983:152). Teachers find it difficult to acquaint parents with some of the principles of good teaching at home which have helpful fundamental guidelines (Griffiths & Hamilton 1984:25). Negligence on the part of the parents prevails in some rural areas because few parents are literate but they fail to meet the demands of helping their children with school work.

(ii) The wrong attitudes of teachers towards parents.

Sometimes parents' attitudes are influenced by the way teachers address them when they have to contribute financially towards the improvement of rural schools. According to Ntikinca (1994:89) the teachers themselves are not well prepared to work with the parents because the school lacks the equipment such as school readers and textbooks which are suitable for use at home by parents when helping their children with school work (Griffiths & Hamilton 1984:29).

Worthwhile projects that offer adult education, such as the one established by Motorola in Soweto, as reported by Dithube (1997:1 (2):16), are desperately needed in the rural areas of Transkei. The aim of the Motorola project is to boost education particularly in the field of mathematics and technology. This project offers help by developing adults in the field of technology and literacy - for example, computer literacy.

(iii) Time commitment and teachers' workload.

Pupil-teacher ratio in rural areas is approximately 100:1 as reported by Geyer (1999: 2 (3): 2) This gives teachers a heavy burden when it comes to evaluating the pupils' work. Individualised teaching is impossible in overcrowded and ruined classrooms, as the latter conditions are not conducive for learning (see app.4 & 8 p149 & 153). The two main demands

on time are to make teachers more available to parents and to speed up the Adult Basic Education according to Griffiths and Hamilton (1984:30). Parents in rural areas are committed to their domestic activities and have limited time to meet with the teachers concerning their children's welfare at school.

(iv) Different levels of parental education.

Another factor is the different levels of parents' education. Parents with a higher level of education place more value on education by attending most meetings, checking their children's school work at home and helping their children with their homework (Schneider & Coleman 1993:85). Those with a lower level of education or illiterate do not co-operate because they do not fully understand exactly what is expected of them towards the formal education of their children.

(v) Socio-economic status of parents.

The socio-economic status of parents in rural areas also impedes the smooth running of the education system. According to the Daily Dispatch Correspondent (1996:14 Aug. 1), some children attend school without school uniform because parents cannot afford to buy one, let alone the stationery and other requirements such as donations towards educational tours, laboratory and library facilities. The latter facilities are not available in almost 80 % of the rural schools (Daily Dispatch Correspondent:1996 14 Aug. 1).

(vi) Parental control.

Overprotective parents are another problem to teachers because some parents are unable to help their children to develop self-monitoring and self-management skills as Ntikinca (1995:90) has stated. Due to the lack of self-control, many rural children are always dependent. Children in rural areas move towards adolescence without developing a keen sense of autonomy and self-control.

(vii) Government Funding.

A low and non-existent budget by the government concerned is another burden to teachers especially in the disadvantaged areas. Adult Basic Education, as reported by Gabriels (1998:2 (8):4-5), has been temporarily stopped due to the lack of funds by the government concerned. The proposed new system of education is not in accordance with the prevailing situation in many rural areas in Transkei (1998:2 (8):4-5). The government's announcement of terminating the temporary teachers put pressure on the remaining teachers because they had to suffer the consequences regarding the increasing pupil-teacher ratio. The termination of temporary teachers was announced without consulting the parents. Naidoo (1998: 2 (3): 13) announced that, terminating temporary teachers would result in vast inequities in education especially to the disadvantaged provinces like the Eastern Cape.

As reported by the Naidoo (1998:2 (3):13), the Cape African Teachers Union called on parents to demand of the state not to implement such a disastrous proposal and other teacher organisations such as SADTU supported this view.

(vii) The Outcomes-Based Education

The Outcomes-Based Education which is already in application in the Junior Primary school, requires better qualified teachers and well equipped classrooms. The problem with the rural schools in the Transkei region is that 78% of them have underqualified teachers and poor or no physical infrastructure such as well structured classrooms (see appendix 11 p156). The major problem as reported by the Naki (1998:23 June:3) is that the government has no funds to develop and equip all the schools with the OBE requirements.

(viii) The problem of underqualified teachers.

The problem of underqualified teachers contributes to their inability to interact with the parents due to the lack of necessary and relevant knowledge. As the newly applied OBE demands well equipped school structures, teachers and parents are faced with a problem of improvising to try and make this new system a success. Implementing OBE has been the result of the rapid changes in this modern world as witnessed by Herr (1981:17)

Involvement in education demands much from parents in terms of time and energy irrespective of being illiterate. God has given parents the responsibility to educate a child (Herr 1981:22).

4 (ix) Meeting with parents and lack of infrastructure

The school's first task regarding parental involvement as stated by Griffiths & Hamilton (1984:23) is to establish a forum for opening a dialogue between parents and teachers. Meeting with parents is done to set up the partnership in order to share professional knowledge with parents.

Parents feel very comfortable when gathered in a big hall to share ideas with teachers instead of gathering in an open space or in a small classroom which cannot accommodate the parents in their large numbers (Students' Column 1998: 2 (3):16).

The lack of physical infrastructure in rural schools is another contributing factor to the parents' poor attendance in meetings. Menyo (1991:13) maintains that the attitude of parents towards the school meetings can be changed by organising social gatherings enabling parents and teachers to know each other.

Parent-teacher associations do not exist in rural schools because of the illiterate parents and literate teachers.

This has resulted in an increasing number of school dropouts as teachers develop inappropriate attitudes towards illiterate parents, when all school developments are dependent on teachers' actions (Tyatyeka 1990:14). Teachers find it difficult to handle pupils and their parents whose background they are not familiar with.

During school activities such as athletics, major games, choir competitions and educational tours, very few or none of the parents do accompany their children to give them moral support. Parents' attendance in such activities would foster much understanding between teachers, parents and children (Gqokoma:1990;9).

There are parents who fully support their children, depending upon the parental education. Some educated parents according to Gqokoma (1990:9), support their children because their actions encourage them towards education. Few educated parents are capable of offering themselves to accompany their children in all educational activities. Contrary to the above facts, as Gqokoma (1990:8) has discovered, very few uneducated parents appreciate the importance of education. They turn up when they have been invited for a parents' meeting and they contribute in the same manner as the literate parents. Therefore, very few parents are capable of involving themselves in their children's education.

What motivates children from illiterate families is the

deficiencies they have learned from their parents in their parents' lives and they would like to counterbalance. Children from illiterate families would like to be on an equal educational standard with children from homes which provide educational experiential background. Equal educational standards can be more effective if parent-teacher-students co-operation exists (Naude 1983:152).

(x) Failure to meet parents concerning school related matters.

Failure on the side of teachers to meet parents concerning school related matters, has resulted in the delay of introducing pre-school education in many rural areas in the former Transkei.

Teachers' meetings with parents concerning the improvement of schools and their establishment, are mostly a failure because parents fail to attend these meetings and to contribute towards the erection of buildings and purchasing of school equipment (Teachers' Column:1988 3 (4):16).

In cases where parents are desperately in need of additional classrooms, some parents offer their homes or houses to be used as classrooms as is the case in many rural schools. (see appendix 7 p152). One of the main reasons for not turning up is not irresponsibility but the lack of funds to contribute towards the development of the school. Many parents in rural areas can be grouped under the low income group as Gqokoma

(1990:10) has stated. More often, children from the low-socio-economic society tend to be underachievers.

(xi) Difficulties facing pre-primary education.

The low level of education prevailing in many rural areas has deprived parents their right to employ competent teachers according to the needs of the school. At the present moment, rural pre-schools are in the hands of unqualified teachers because no Teacher Training Institution in the Transkei Region trains teachers for Early Childhood Development (Focus on ECD:1998 2 (4):6).

The government is using Non-Governmental Organisations to train personnel for the reception classes. Because there are no resources to help in the construction and development of the pre-schools in rural areas, teachers and few parents organise day concerts for fund raising. The funds so collected help in the purchase of material required for teaching in the reception classes (Engelbrecht:1999,14 September:3).

(xii) Inexperienced teachers

Inexperienced teachers lack the necessary skills to communicate with the communities they are serving. The above matter, according to Betela (1982:61), has affected the school committees because of the clash of ideas between the teachers and the community members. Some school committee members abscond and never attend any meetings because of the clash of ideas regarding the school development.

(xiii) The family-school connection

The family-school connection is weak especially during the reception year. The ties between the home and school are weakened by the parents' non-involvement in the governance and decision making in school related matters (Naude 1983:152). The rural societies which have tried to introduce pre-primary education are faced with problems of the society members who vandalise the equipment collected for use in these pre-schools. For example, all the collected tyres are stolen and set alight when people are celebrating the New Year's day (Carlisle 1998:21 October:3).

3.4 TRADITIONAL LIFE STYLES VERSUS FORMAL EDUCATION.

The family according to Ngubentombi (1977:49) is a primary situation into which close personal relationships are established, by socialising, rearing and introducing the child to the culture of the society into which he was born.

African children are born in a multicultural society but the western culture is preferred by many parents. Therefore contradiction between the African life styles and the formal education as stated by Ngubentombi (1997:49) occurs.

Traditionally, African, children are expected to contribute towards household chores, helping their parents and at the same time being educated according to western standards.

Many rural residents, as agreed upon by Ntikinca (1996:91), stay ignorant of the complex relationship between socio-economic conditions and educational achievement. Some parents find themselves unable to provide motivation that will improve the academic achievement of their children.

3.4.1 How do African children cope with traditional life styles and formal education ?

(a) Girls.

In many rural areas in the Transkei, illiteracy as stated by Nyati (1984:84), has forced many parents to neglect educating

women. Some parents believe that girls should marry and bear children meaning that they bring up girls for economic purposes, that is getting "lobola" according to the African tradition. Failure to educate women has resulted in production of large families exposed to health hazards and the highest unemployment rate (Nyati 1984:86).

Despite many advices concerning family planning, the African tradition bars many African individuals from taking family planning precautions. According to Nyati (1984:85), the latter has caused malnutrition and diseases related to lack of education. Black children in the Black societies have spoken out against poverty as advertised in the Students' Column (1998:2 (3):16), commenting on small school budget. These children went on to say that their parents did not support their education financially because of rife unemployment.

It is traditional in Africa that girls help their mothers with household chores, especially in rural areas. Whilst these pupils have to do their homework, they have to prepare meals for their parents who are tired from working in the fields for the whole day (Ngubentombi 1977:49). Some children do not get any helping hand from their parents concerning their school work. These children develop the tendency of not doing their home work. The above fact results in clashes between the children and their teachers, thus resulting in school dropouts as stated by Makalima (1995:20).

The teachers at school bear the burden of trying to contact parents concerning the children's deteriorating progress but illiteracy and negligence on the other side make it impossible for the former to reach their goals, such as producing responsible adults. Hashim (1983:79) states that the indigenous Xhosa education is based on a definite system of values and policies determined according to the demands of Xhosa tribal life. The latter clashes with the formal system of education and mostly, tribal life occupies the parents in so much that they fail to involve themselves in their children's education. When investigating the Xhosa tribal life, one discovers that its policies make no provision for the development of individuality and the spirit of enterprise as the Australian Journal of Education (1988:229) has stated.

Being exposed to both formal education and tribal life has confused many girls, resulting in early school leaving to seek better life in urban areas where life is easier than what they have experienced (Hashim 1983:80).

It is not alarming as Mdletye (1990:21) has discovered, that an eight year old girl who is supposed to be at school babysits when the mother is busy hoeing in the fields. The girl, according to the Xhosa custom, has to learn to mind the baby at an early stage, thus preparing her for adulthood. The K.N.N Commission of enquiry (1973:36) agrees that domestic chores are of more vital importance to parents in rural areas than schooling. The remedy for this problem is to prioritise

the redressing of rural schools by educating all illiterate parents so that they understand what is expected of them (Pampalis:1998 2 (3):7).

(ii) How do boys cope with traditional life styles and formal education?

Traditionally boys have to herd their parent's livestock and in rural areas herding cattle is still practised irrespective of pupils who attend school (Ngubentombi 1977:48). Cultural tradition is passed on from one generation to the next. Boys know that early in the morning they have to milk the cows and drive them to the veld despite the fact that they will lose the first lessons at school. In the afternoon cattle need to be fetched from the veld, thus giving boys no time to do their homework (Duminy 1968:68).

The above fact is regarded as indigenous education whereby all the boys have to learn how to care for their fathers' livestock, thus preparing them for adulthood. The boys' school performance in rural areas is adversely affected by absenteeism, late coming to school and high drop-out rate (Mavumengwana 1990:8).

There are days when boys have to dip cattle, meaning that half of the class will not attend or will arrive late. Losing lessons and experience of repeated failure has made many boys in rural areas to leave school and seek for jobs in towns

(Duminy 1968:28). When the boys have to attend the initiation ceremonies, the formal schooling system has to be affected because boys have to absent themselves for quite a long time. According to Horrel (1953:4-5) this absenteeism is rife in the most remote rural areas in the Transkei region.

Some literate parents are trying to arrange for these initiations during holidays to avoid clashes with the formal education. The four school terms are interrupted because children have to assist parents in their daily chores. Boys, as Duminy (1968:28) has discovered, have to assist in cultivation of fields before they can go to school.

In some cases this means losing classes for weeks. Some children work as labourers in the fields to finance their education. Many parents in rural areas according to Ngubentombi (1977:51), are interested in seeing their fields cultivated and hoed disregarding the importance of schooling. Child labour in the cultivation of fields has resulted in poor produce because of incorrect methods of farming. The poor produce has resulted in the poverty that many rural dwellers are experiencing (Hashim 1983:67).

Rural life has been adversely affected by the 1913 land act which allocated only 13% of the land to the Blacks, who were excluded in participating in co-operatives to market their produce. The increase in taxation, as Hashim (1983:66) agrees, has created the high cost of living in the rural areas. The

production of maize as a major crop in Transkei is decreasing as cited by Hashim (1983:70). Teachers are trying by all means to discourage parents from using school children in their house hold chores during school hours. However, there is improvement although at a slower rate.

3.4.2 How do parents cope with traditional life and formal education?

Traditionally, education was a shared responsibility with the family, religious institutions and the community playing an important role in grooming the child for adulthood (Makasi 1992:1). The problem arose when the formal system of a western type of education was introduced to the Black communities. The rural residents were illiterate as is the case even nowadays. Some residents are semi-literate because of early school leaving due to lack of encouragement from their parents.

(i) Illiterate and semi-literate parents' role in education.

Some black parents in rural areas educate their children irrespective of being illiterate or not. The teachers and parents do not co-operate because of the misunderstanding caused between illiterate and literate parents (Gqokoma 1990:12). Many illiterate parents show no interest in their children's work, resulting in their children's inability to develop intrinsic motivation.

Many illiterate parents work as migrant labourers in South African mines, leaving mothers as the only guardians at home. In some cases, mothers work as domestic workers in the suburbs and townships all over the country as agreed upon by Hashim (1983:61). This means, some children are left in the care of grandparents and other members of the extended families.

The working parents contribute by financing their children's education on request through the guardian left by the former at home. In many cases which need the presence of the biological parents, teachers have to struggle because many guardians are not interested as they are illiterate or semi-literate (Maqeda 1992:13). Concerning the school work, many children from semi-literate and illiterate parents experience the problem of not being supported educationally. The poor achievement due to the lack of parental support results in conflict with the teachers because many children's school work has no follow up. They are neither corrected nor helped when revising and practising certain skills at home (Maqeda 1992:11).

The most crucial fact discovered by Mdletye (1990:31) is the inability to care for children as it happens that some parents leave up to seven children in the care of a relative who is not even interested in their education.

What handicaps many rural school children, are the poor home circumstances where children are neglected by parents and such

children from deprived families, as Maqeda (1992:12) has investigated, tend to behave as if they have no prospects.

Illiterate parents do not encourage their children to do their homework, nor do they help them because as Menyo (1991:11) puts it, these parents are ignorant of whatever happens at school. The lack of parental assistance has affected the children's academic performance especially those children from poor families. In many rural areas education is inaccessible to the poor. Even when they have access, some of the children from illiterate families are likely to fail academically.

Many illiterate parents either do not bother or do not know about nourishing foods concerning the diet of their children. Menyo (1991:12) also claims that some children's performance is crippled from the cradle, because malnutrition and lack of stimulation prevent the brains from developing fully.

The majority of illiterate and semi-literate parents have negative attitude towards education thus affect the academic performance of their children. It is usual to hear some parents running down the name of the school and teachers in the presence of their children, and this, according to Menyo (1991:15), affects the interest of the children towards any school related matters. Poor environmental factors such as non-exposure to televisions and radios, as stated by Luswazi (1992:2), affect the academic achievement of children especially those from remote areas where the conditions are

not conducive to learning.

The high unemployment rate has made some parents not to afford to pay for their children's education. This problem affects the education of children from less advantaged households, worse if children cannot be positively supported by their parents. Children from illiterate families as stipulated by Tonjeni (1983:17) are truant and lack self-confidence because they are easily misled by their peers.

The underdevelopment of the rural areas is becoming worse because in many homes both parents are jobless and nobody caters for the financing of the children's education. Free education is impossible because of the lack of resources as reported by Garson (1998:3 (11):2).

Developing quality schooling in rural areas where the resources are so lean is difficult. It would be better if parents had to contribute financially towards the improvement and development of rural schools.

Emphasis on tribal life in rural areas is typical of many illiterate parents, and the improvement of rural life to be on equal footing with that of urban areas is most difficult because of the scarcity of resources (Mlanjana 1991:10). That the child is not exposed to certain facilities which would enhance his learning in one way or another, has resulted in a

slow progress and early school leaving which are a characteristic of children from poor background families (Mlanjana 1991:15).

Surprisingly, very few illiterate parents are capable of financing their children's education by selling their livestock and their crops. Illiterate as they are, they appreciate the beauty and the benefits of education from the literate families. Some of the illiterate parents contribute sensibly when there are parents meetings and will always donate financially or materials in need, according to the needs of the school (Mdletye 1990:20).

(ii) Literate Parents' role in education.

Literate parents constitute the families with high socio-economic status as Mlanjana (1991:15) has stated. In rural areas, almost 90% of literate parents take the lead whenever there is a PTSA meeting, parents meeting and in all social gatherings involving the school. Playing major roles at school does not mean that these parents have neglected their African tradition but they are capable of serving both needs. Parents' different levels of education make them to act as role models in the rural societies.

Fortunately some of the literate parents work locally, and are capable of supervising their children's schoolwork and school attendance (Ntikinca 1984:89). The economic condition of the

literate parents has made them to value school education because they possess the financial means and willingness to provide whatever is required at school.

Menyo (1991:10) supports the idea that parental education's background can have a bearing on pupils' scholastic performance. Literate parents involve themselves practically in their children's education, by helping them when doing their homework, helping them with revision when writing tests and motivating them to improve their performance at school.

(iii) Mutual trust and harmony between parents and teachers

Mutual trust and harmony between parents and teachers as agreed upon by Menyo (1991:13) influence the children's scholastic achievement to the highest degree. Literate parents share ideas with their children through regular conversations about their school work together with their problems. The capability of sharing ideas with children at home, makes it easier for the parents to discuss all their children's problems with their teachers. Even personal problems which can hinder the child's school progress can be solved, as Tyatyeka (1990:10) has stated.

Teachers in rural areas depend mostly on literate parents for all the developments of the school. Parents with good sources of income are capable of donating for the erection of classrooms. Mlanjana (1991:16) is of the opinion that parental

occupation is of importance in educational achievement because it affects the opportunities children have for observing and copying adult activities.

Children from literate parents are exposed to stimulating and rich academic environment in so much that these children are leaders in class especially in problem solving situations.

Literate parents are capable of helping teachers in educational tours although working conditions do not always allow them (Nqolobe 1990:30).

Literate parents' interest in education has made them to set a good example of visiting schools more frequently, to find out how their children are getting on with their work. Parental school visits are a lesson to those teachers who have negative attitudes towards the visiting of classrooms by parents so as to keep in touch with their substitute counterparts (Naude 1983:152).

There are exceptional cases where literate parents are a backlog as far as the school development is concerned, in the rural areas. It does happen that literate parents exclude themselves as far as the development of the children's education is concerned. They usually complain about not being informed concerning the developments to be implemented, reasons of poor health and being away for work, as outlined in the Australian Journal of Education (1991:281).

(iv) Single parents' role in the education of their children.

Single parents constitute the literate, semi-literate and illiterate parents. According to Sitole (1993:72), single parents are no exception towards their involvement in school related matters. A high number of children live in one parent homes, most of them in mother-only families as some have been born outside the wedlock.

Divorce, separation and death contribute towards the rising number of single parents as Laosa (1983:333) has investigated. Previously, many authors like Zajonc (1976:235) assumed that children from single parents especially mothers, lacked intellectual resources because of the father's absence. It has been discovered that single parenthood is diverse and as a result one cannot assume that children from single parenthood are low achievers nor that single parents do not involve themselves in school related matters. Sithole (1993:73) noted that some disadvantaged mothers gave more educational support to their children, similar to children with both parents. Very few single fathers entrust the education of their children to their relatives and those who are responsible for their children's education are not different from couples who share their responsibilities.

3.5 DISCUSSION OF DATA FROM PRINCIPALS.

Ten randomly selected principals from different rural schools gave similar comments concerning parental involvement in rural areas. Their responses are discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.5.1 Comments on rural schools' principals concerning the effectiveness of PTSAs and parental involvement.

(i) The effectiveness of PTSAs.

80% of principals in rural areas experience problems of the same nature concerning poor parental attendance in PTSA meetings. Although parents are given the opportunity to meet the teachers to discuss their children's progress, many parents do not attend the meetings and end up resisting the resolutions of the meetings which need to be implemented.

20% of school principals spelt it out that parents have a tendency of influencing one another even if some are willing to co-operate. The major problem which causes many PTSA members not to perform their duties well is that, they are ill-informed because of the high illiterate rate in many rural areas.

Parents' meetings are also not well attended, ignorance and illiteracy in many rural areas being forwarded as the reasons for the poor attendance. 60% of principals blamed teachers for

not visiting the homes of their students, thus making it difficult for parents and teachers to discuss school problems affecting the learners. In the majority of cases, parents have no interest in attending meetings as long as they see that the situation at school is calm.

75% of principals are of the opinion that the parents' attendance is usually good when there is a crisis or conflict involving one of the teachers. Parents do not come to PTSA meetings because they think the principal is going to ask for money for the school's development.

It is evident that many parents cannot donate their energy, unless they will be paid by offering such services. Parents are expected to plaster classrooms with mud as many rural schools are built with daub and wattle. In winter people take their livestock to school for shelter. Early in the morning they take them out, and when the principal inquires, nobody knows, but cow-dung is all over the school yard.

The commencement of classes in the morning is delayed as the pupils have to clean the yard and some classrooms which were used as kraals at night because there are no doors in some of the classrooms (see appendix 10 p155). In some areas, parents are unwilling to be the members of school governing bodies because they do not want to be involved in the activities of the school. Parents in rural areas expect the government to do everything for them as they always proclaim that they have

nothing to contribute towards the development of the school.

(ii) Parental involvement in school activities.

15% of principals in rural schools agreed that some parents do offer help in repairing schools although they complain that the government is dragging its feet in the building of schools. As far as the school work is concerned, rural school principals experienced the common problem of the parents' inability to help their children with their homework. The common cause in almost all rural areas is illiteracy.

Another contributing factor to the parents' failure in helping children in their school work is that, parents are too engaged with their work programs. Some principals were not eager to mention all the reasons that caused the parents to be less interested in the schools' extramural activities.

Concerning extramural activities, 70% of principals complained about the parents' lack of interest in helping them when their children have to participate in all forms of recreation. Many parents are interested in helping the teachers in training the pupils in sport, but due to the pupils' bad behaviour, they cannot give any support.

Some literate parents offer a helping hand when it comes to repairing some school buildings, but others do not bother. Many principals complained about literate parents who are not

exemplary to the society, especially when it comes to the financial support of the school. The above fact has made some illiterate parents to ignore all school matters as they regard literate parents their role models.

3.5.2 Responses to the question : How often do you call parents' meetings and PTSA meetings ?

Almost 80% of school principals stated that they call parents' meetings twice a year, some called meetings when there is a need to do so and others called these meetings once a quarter as stipulated in the government gazette. PTSA meetings are called often by the school principals, to discuss the daily requirements of the school.

The lack of understanding between the teachers and the parents is caused by the rare communication between the two parties. If parents and teachers meet once or twice a year, chances are mean that school problems can be solved unanimously by both parties. Other principals were of the opinion that pupils from illiterate families cannot be helped and motivated towards performing better in their studies because there are a few chances of meeting enlightened people.

Parents cannot co-operate if they are only called when there is a financial problem at school, one school principal argued, stating that the lack of social gatherings has made even those who are willing to offer financial services to withdraw.

Parent-teacher co-operation will help parents to feel free to voice their views in all meetings.

Although many parents are capable of voicing out their views, it does happen as one principal said, that the suggestions are not implemented as it was stipulated in a meeting, leaving the principal and the teachers with the problem to solve. As rural schools are made with daub and wattle, the buildings need renovations every year, or after every rainy season. This means that maintenance of all the physical infrastructure lies in the hands of the community because at present the government cannot build all the rural schools.

(i) Parents' attitudes towards sport.

School grounds are also not up to standard because they are not maintained. As many rural dwellers belong to the low socio-economic group, the community cannot afford to fence the school, and this exposes the school property to all passers-by. For the purposes of recreation, major games such as soccer are not given much attention because of the conditions of the sport fields to be used by the pupils.

The bad state of many schools sport fields has made the few willing parents not to take part in helping the teachers to coach the pupils. Children residing next to the school also use the school fields for their purposes without getting permission from the principal. The easy access to school

premises has made many illiterates who hate education to vandalise the school property.

3.5.3 Response to the question: Were the parents involved in choosing the curriculum?

100% of the response to the above question was negative. In the rural areas no parents were ever consulted concerning the curriculum to be offered at school. That is why many parents do not know and understand what a formal school situation should look like.

When it comes to the bad attendance at school only 10% of the principals stated that they have a good attendance. Those who experienced poor attendance, complained about bad results at the end of the year resulting in repeated failure and dropping out at an early stage.

Excluding parents from taking part when choosing curricula has resulted in the parents' inability to help their children with their school work, one of the principals argued. Only the literate parents and very few illiterate parents who have been exposed to ABET do try to help their children with their school work.

Bad attendance as one of the principals complained, is due to the parents lack of knowledge of what is prevailing at school because children are assigned duties when they are expected to

be at school. Working parents are also to blame because they come home after work tired and have no time to devote to their children's educational needs.

3.6 DISCUSSION OF DATA FROM PARENTS.

In rural areas parents constitute 5% literate, 15% semi-literate and 80% illiterate. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to three categories of parents. The three parental groups responded almost differently to the questionnaire.

(i) Literate parents' response.

3% of literate parents agreed that they fail to involve themselves in their children's education due to their commitments. 1% of these parents stated that they support their children financially and contribute towards building and renovation of classrooms, but they cannot be personally involved in all school activities. Working far from homes was the reason they put forth. Only 1% of literate parents agreed that they work hand in hand with the teachers at school.

(ii) Semi-literate parents' response.

10% of semi-literate parents spelt it out that they do not understand what is expected of them as far as school work is concerned. Concerning the financial support for building and renovating the classrooms, these parents complained about

unemployment which results in their poor financial situation. 5% of these parents agreed that they try to supervise their children's work at home but to a certain extent, because of their limited knowledge.

(iii) Illiterate parents' response.

75% of illiterate parents are not interested in involving themselves in any educational matters. They claim that they have never been to school and have no idea of what is happening in any educational institution. 5% of illiterate parents showed keen interest in involving themselves in their children's education. They agreed to contribute towards the building and renovations of classrooms together with attending parents meetings.

3.7 Conclusion.

Taking the poor financial situation of the Eastern Cape into consideration, education in the rural areas is in crisis. Many parents who have been working as migrant labourers in the mines have lost their jobs and have no means to finance their children's education.

Despite being poor, responses to the questionnaires support the fact that illiteracy has a major influence on parental involvement in the rural areas. This situation can only be improved by introducing Adult Basic Education to all

illiterate parents.

As the financial situation is becoming worse, it is evident that the third world countries will never reach the standard of education of the first world countries. Poor financial status will force many rural people to remain illiterate or semi-literate.

CHAPTER 4

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA AS THE TWO EXEMPLARY FIRST WORLD COUNTRIES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Unlike schools in the second and third world countries, English and American schools, as discovered by Wolfendale (1989:3), enjoy the partnership of parents as supporters, teachers of their children, teacher-aids and volunteers in a classroom. Parents in the two countries are policy makers, partners with teachers and advisory board members. Parental involvement in America and England has brought the schools of the two afore mentioned countries to the standard of education they are enjoying today. Compared to the Transkei region being researched, a lot needs to be done in the field of education to bring Transkei to an equal standard with America and England.

4.2.1 Parental choice in England today regarding the children's education.

During the eighteenth century, British parents had no say in the education of their children, as cited by Van Schalkwyk and Dekker et al (1988:153). Parents in Britain decided that children should be educated in accordance with their wishes. Discussions concerning parental choice and power in

educational decision making was a matter of concern in many parliamentary debates in 1970. The state and local authorities were obliged to take account of the wishes of parents (Halstead 1994:17).

The 1994 Education Act in Britain set up a variety of types of specialist schools to choose from. Parents had to select the school most convenient to their homes for their children. According to Halstead (1994:21), the 1997 White Paper suggested that parental preference should be intrinsic. The control of education was decentralised. Local Education Authorities (LEA) have to control and manage education at the local level. By emphasizing the parental choice, the 1980 Act brought about improved parental involvement in Britain.

From 1980-1993, developments in parental choice concerning the education of children increased, resulting in the establishment of the National Curriculum, local management of schools (LMS) (Halstead 1994:24). Parents in Britain have more opportunities to express their choice than ever. They also have more expectations of taking active interest in their children's education and as consumers who can only work thoroughly where there is a freedom of choice (Wolfendale 1989:105).

Improved parental involvement in Britain has brought about a better schooling and provision of financial assistance towards the children's education and plans for the future in the

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Improved parental involvement in Britain has brought about a better schooling and provision of financial assistance towards the children's education and plans for the future in the

education system (Wolfendale 1989:109).

4.2.2 Parental involvement in education in England

Decision making, power-sharing, equal rights in self-expression and the exercise of mutual responsibility and accountability have been the building blocks of partnership in the education situation between teachers and parents (Wolfendale 1989:107).

(i) Endorsement of parental involvement in England

Parental involvement in England is endorsed from pre-primary education up to the tertiary level. Children with special needs such as mentally retarded children are also treated in the same manner. The above are achieved through the involvement of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs). The latter provide all the necessary information to help parents in dealing with educational matters with ease (Wolfendale 1989:108).

It has become a tradition in England for parents to be actively involved in remedial teaching and to help their children with the curriculum and participate in the annual review of curricula. Parents act as educators especially when the doors have been opened for them in the field of children with special needs. Positive and regular contacts with teachers are catered for. Teachers, according to Wolfendale

(1989:111), are seen as the vehicle through which parents become involved.

The importance of parental involvement in education in England, is even cherished by voluntary organisations which organise courses for parents e.g. National Autistic Society. These organisations according to Wolfendfale (1989:111) form partnerships with local authorities to recruit and train personnel who will offer guidance and support in the education situation.

Working together with these organisations, has resulted in solid and valuable services from several funded family support groups. Many societies like the Elfrida Rathbone Society have produced a parents' guide helping to run family projects and liaises with special schools to form national charity links with families of children with special needs. These associations, as stated by Wolfendale (1989:111), have a view of influencing change and improvement to all parents' associations and parent-professional relationships.

To consolidate the parental support towards the school needs, day conferences for parents and professionals have been arranged by the Local Education Authorities. For example, there is a Newham Parents' centre where parents' support network is provided (Wolfendale 1989:112). In these centres, information and guidance leaflets together with sponsored meetings, including individual casework support for families

are provided. The Newham Parents' Centre is a project where parents exchange information, thus exemplifying the self-help peer-focused parent-to-parent involvement (Wolfendale 1989:112).

In the school support groups mentioned previously, parents are taught skills in homework management, especially within the areas of literacy. Experiences are shared and transmitted to new parents coming to the programme including a support service for families of children with special needs. A team of parents who have children with special needs, volunteer to organise training courses where a manual and materials are provided. According to Cullingford (1996:7), parents feel welcomed into the school, especially the fact that British parents have the right to meet governors once a year.

(ii) Parental and family involvement in literacy

Unique technology such as computer literacy offer home-reading programmes through parent-teacher agreements. Cullingford (1996:28) states that the outcomes of parental involvement in these reading schemes have been a success because the children's reading scores had improved. The fact that the majority of the Britons are exposed to the society which takes reading as a custom, has helped many children to improve their reading skills (Cullingford 1996:29).

Children in England are capable of cutting down the time they

spend viewing television. The parents have taken the onus of encouraging and motivating their children to decrease the time they spend watching T.V. movies (Cullingford 1996:29).

(iii) Literacy for parents

Most public libraries in the U.K. including municipal libraries, are very supportive in encouraging the youth to read. Parents accompany their children when loaning some books of interest from the libraries. The love of reading to improve literacy, makes one to read even when travelling. Parental and family involvement in literacy has helped parents to value and praise their children in the effort of improving literacy (Cullingford 1996:30).

(iv) Parental reports regarding children's performance at home

In England, detailed parental reports whereby parents communicate the developmental traits revealed by children during family or home study, are sent to teachers at school. These reports are concerned with the number of studies per night, the consistency of the study, the systematic study of all the subjects and the importance of the academic work to the pupils. Stallard (1997:12), states that the reports issued by parents are reliable, comprehensive and are always available for future references. Newsletters concerning other parents' views are sent to all parents by the school concerned.

Parents are free to make comments at the end of the report on the space provided concerning their dislikes on the aspects of school policies that operated during the semester (Stallard 1997:13). When parents have specific policy recommendations, school staff is consulted and a response explaining why such an action has been taken or is to be implemented, is given to the parents. This process of parental report is highly recommended by British schools because it has filled the gap which existed between the home and the schools' communication framework. Parents in Britain are analytical and discriminating, meaning that they want to know what goes on in school and closely observe it even by drawing evidence from any source available to them (Cullingford 1996:17).

(v) The parents' socio-economic status regarding financial support towards their children's learning

The innumerable home-school initiatives in the United Kingdom, has given the parents the responsibility for seeking schools of their choice for their children. The choice of schools depends upon the parents' financial situation. If the parents do not have enough funds, children are sent to a public school. Once the financial situation improves, private education in the best schools is preferred (Cosin and Hales 1997:68).

Parents have to deal with a range of agencies involved with their children's lives. The 1994 Education Act affirms that

children should be cared for in their own family. This makes the work-load for the social workers easier, and maintains the balance between the child protection and support services.

Needy parents with low socio-economic status and educational deficiencies, inhibit the educational support because they throw all the school work-load on the shoulders of the teachers (Cosin and Hales 1997:68). To help these parents assume their responsibilities at home, community workers and adult education specialists help in working with needy parents.

Apart from helping parents who have problems, many parents involve themselves in improving resources available to their children. Some parents, as stated by Cosin and Hales (1997:71), offer their houses for educational purposes e.g. where parents can help individual children with their problematic areas as far as their school work is concerned. Attendance to concerts for fund-raising is supportive to many children and teachers as their school work is always in need of funds. Parents are empowered to avoid the fizzling out of many programmes as the latter does happen due to parental negligence.

Educators, as agreed upon by Cosin and Hales (1997:72), view parental empowerment from relational and motivational perspectives. On the relational side, parents visit homes of other families to view how these parents progress with their

children and that gives all parents the ability to compare their different approaches on their children's school work at home. Motivationally, parents develop meaningful partnerships for school improvement by providing resources to schools. Such parents, as cited by Ellen and Charles (1997:27), are viewed as assets by principals of many schools.

4.2.3 Parent-teacher-associations

Local Education Authorities in the United Kingdom do not provide inservice training only, but promote parental participation in all parent-teacher associations. Short courses conducted on a daily basis are launched with a high-profile and a follow-up in well documented areas concerning reading and Mathematics at home is made (Wolfendale 1989:115).

Parent-teacher associations in England consist of educationalists and parents. In these associations, parents and teachers have to agree in principle whereby reiteration of the rationale to involve parents in their children's development and education is given priority. Wolfendale (1989:116) goes on saying that, in these associations ground rules are established where mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities are acknowledged as cardinal features.

To improve partnerships between teachers and parents, both parties have to recognise the potential for cultural

conflicts. Thorp (1997:262) agrees that attitudes about appropriate behaviour at different ages and behaviour management strategies differ among professionals, families and cultures. In these associations, the parents have to recognise the powerful role of the teacher as the latter acts as an intermediary between the child and the parents.

United Kingdom is a multicultural country, so parent-teacher-associations have to explore attitudes about diversity and diverse populations. The latter is done by inviting all families to be involved in programmes concerned about appropriate parenting. Teachers, according to Thorp (1997:265), have to practice reframing by interpreting problems from a more positive perspective. When some parents fail to honour the involvement in certain parent-teacher-associations, or parents' meetings, teachers should not jump to negative conclusions but guard against stereotypical cultural assumptions about a family.

In these parent-teacher associations, both partners learn about one's culture so as to get the best information by listening, sharing, observing and find out about the community. As parents have to be kept abreast of what is prevailing at school, Thorp (1997:267) is of the opinion that parent-teacher associations should aim at analyzing the curriculum for cultural, linguistic and family relevance.

Families are supported in their roles of transmitting cultural

learning and supporting cognitive development. From parents, teachers get knowledge that help the former better understand the children and how they can enrich the curriculum. Meeting with parents of disabled children provide the teachers with information and resources. As these families are an effective source of information, Thorp (1997:268) states that they feel welcome in the school setting especially when seeing that other community members are present and are treated as valuable resources. Roles and responsibilities for professionals are identified and those of parents respectively. Parents are free to provide key input to the assessment process whenever given the opportunity to give information about their children's behaviour at home. Parents have seen the school as a non-threatening place to be, especially when teachers acknowledge their expertise.

Parents become extremely involved if they understand that their efforts will benefit their children (Karther & Loudon 1997:43). In these associations, teachers try their best to encourage parents to supervise home activities and participate in the teachers' class plans. Family activities that foster parent-child interaction are more motivating than homework assignments. Some teachers take the pains of inviting some parents with particular hobbies and talent to share with students in class.

Parent-teacher conferences are arranged on a regular basis to keep parents more informed and encourage them to focus on

child strengths than on the child's weaknesses. This according to Karther and Loudon (1997:43), will help parents in tracking the progress of their children. Parent-teacher associations offer help to parents with lesser education and limited resources to gain more information about parental involvement. These associations raise funds to purchase library books and computers (Cosin & Hales 1997:72).

4.2.4 Parental roles at schools

In the United Kingdom, the working committee called Parents and Children and Teachers assist in the Schools and Community Centres, aiming at providing services that will bring teacher and parents together in meeting the child's special needs (Wolfendale 1989:47). Introductory meetings are called before any school activities can resume. Videos that give information about what schools will be like for their children, are shown. Videos are used at the introductory parent meeting, to enable all parents to select items with relevant information to their own needs.

(i) Parents who speak English as a second language

Parents who speak English as a second language are provided with information which is easily accessible to them. Secondly, the video shows a model of interaction between parent and child. Besides videos, in the introductory meetings, parents have to sign certain forms, thus committing themselves

concerning what prevails at school. The head teacher, as described by Wolfendale (1989:28), gives information concerning the situation confronting children when starting school and how parents will play their role.

(ii) Implication of failure to attend meetings

Parents who fail to attend the first meetings are given the second chance by being contacted and called to arrange a time when they can come to school to see the videos and collect packs for their children (Wolfendale 1989:28). Children are given packs which contain different games to be played at home under the parental supervision. Parents are advised to keep the pack for two weeks and thereafter parent volunteers check the pack on return and restock them. Parent volunteers also collect comments, difficulties and queries parents might have on their involvement with the children at home (Wolfendale 1989:29).

(iii) Fund raising projects

England as a first world country has well equipped schools where resources are always within the reach of every individual. In the school premises, parents are capable of running toy and book libraries, also helping with concerts for fund raising (Cosin & Hales 1997:71). To raise school funds, parents help with concerts, cleaning the school's surroundings and decorating, thus offering pot plants and ornamental trees.

In class, parents help teachers in supervising children's activities such as cutting and pasting. Parents, according to Cosin & Hales (1997:71), help in developing the child's skills and gardening. Parents take part in extra-mural activities by attending sport days and all fund raising activities.

Fund raising activities include selling snacks, fun toys and T-shirts. When children are on tour, parents make their best in availing themselves by accompanying their children and contributing financially towards all school trips. In all school policies, parents are involved as they play the greatest role in funding many school activities (Cosin & Hales 1997:72).

4.2.5 Parental roles at home

After attending a meeting on Getting Ready for school, parents as stated by Wolfendale (189:28), go home with packs which have tasks to be supervised by parents.

(i) Parental and family involvement in literacy

Frequency of a home-reading programme is planned by parents after receiving library books at school. Stories as agreed upon by Cullingford (1996:29), are read to pupils by parents and shared reading at home between the siblings prevails in English homes. Improvement of literacy has been the result of the shared reading at home under parental supervision. Co-

operative working between teachers and parents has also contributed to the children's literacy improvement (Cullingford 1996:30). Parents are expected to give the report on the child's progress to the teachers. When there is a problem, teachers intervene by offering help whenever needed.

(ii) Parental involvement in Maths

In the United Kingdom, parental training offers the ability to deal with all school subjects at home (Cosin & Hales 1997:55). There are schemes which have been designed to help parents by giving them more information on how to enhance children's adjustment to learning. Different approaches IMPACT (Inventing Maths for Parents, Children and Teachers) being one of them, are used to help many parents in teaching maths to their children at home. Cullingford (1996:30), goes on saying that some parents succeed in teaching maths at home without using IMPACT. Parents often give report that acquisition of numeracy has improved and academic success of their children.

(iii) Parental involvement in special educational needs

To help children who have disabilities and behavioural problems, parents in England have formed partnerships with professionals like therapists, teachers, social workers, health and social services (Cullingford 1996:32). Parents are involved in as educators in a home-based learning programme for young children with learning difficulties and

developmental delays. Parental skills which are expected when dealing with children who have problems include teaching, monitoring, planning, assessment and evaluating the children. Cullingford (1996:32), states that working as a team, by parents, community, nurses, health visitors, psychologists and teachers to help the children with problems, has resulted in appropriate goals and teaching techniques envisaged by parents at home.

Positive and effective results of parental involvement in England has been enhanced by the teachers maximised parental input. Teachers improved their quality of home-school links by contacting parents on a regular basis. The Education Department has recognised the value added components of pupil's educational achievement contributed by parents (Cullingford 1996:35).

4.2.6 The role of the society in children's education in England

In England the presence of parents, industrialists, businessmen and women and all senior citizens within the context of a community school environment, provides a richness in the school development (Wolfendale 1989:81). The involvement of the community in the children's education provides an environment where all the individuals feel equally recognised and motivated.

Community involvement, as cited by McGivney (1997:126), includes community residents, church associations, Parent-Teachers-associations and other children's groups who start involving themselves from the pre-primary level.

Some community members have found employment through involving themselves in all school related matters. Many adults in the community have become playgroup leaders and others have founded mother-and toddler groups (McGivney 1997:126). Some community members were being trained as teachers during their involvement. These community members excel in the teaching profession as they increased their knowledge about how children learn. Pensioners and some workers use their vacations as child-minders, foster parents and ancillary workers in schools.

(i) The role of businessmen and women in education

Businessmen and women have sponsored many schools, thus providing the latter with all the technological requirements such as computers. If not so, bursaries are awarded to needy children and pupils who achieve outstandingly (Wolfendale 1989:110).

(ii) Voluntary organisations and their support towards education

Voluntary organisations have contributed to the changing needs

climate, by developing services for parents and families. *The National Autistic Society* and *Workers Educational Association* run awareness and training courses for parents. WEA in association with many local education authorities, recruit and train voluntary parent and advisors to work with parents. The parents are advised and trained on how to assess the children's school-work (Wolfendale 1989:111).

Elfrica Rathbone Society is one of the funded family support groups which have supplied a solid and valuable service by producing a parents' guide to the 1981 Education Act. The above mentioned society runs family projects, liaises with special schools and is involved in an advocacy project for parents. Contact-a-society is a national charity organisation which links families of children with special needs (Wolfendale 1989:111).

(iii) Community Education

School governing bodies in England take responsibility to see to it that parents are involved in all school related matters. Wolfendale (1989:26) is of the opinion that pupils and non-teaching staff have the power to create working parties and sub-committees for shaping decision in a wider constituency of community interests. Parents and governing bodies act as links with the community and other places of work whereby hundreds of local communities develop themselves. Schools are organised to form a team where mutual respect, real dialogue between

parents, pupils and professionals are a basis for continued negotiated learning.

4.3 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN AMERICA

4.3.1 Introduction

A multicultural country like the United States of America has advocated compulsory schooling in the early twentieth century. The country's citizens are hard-working. Parents act as role models by being able to contribute to society and loyal to their country (Halstead 1994:36). Americans unanimously agreed that schools should balance the value of providing common educational experiences that are necessary for establishing a common foundation of knowledge and values to all Americans.

4.3.2 Parental choice in America

In America parents have a choice and freedom to select schools that are in accordance with their traditions and reflect the diversity of values in a pluralistic society. Ogawa and Dutton (1997:334), state that parents choose schools which best fit their children's educational needs. Parents have a right of choosing curricula that match the schools' experiences and the children's needs.

To alleviate segregation, magnet schools as agreed upon by Halstead (1994:40), were established in America in 1970. Magnet schools have provided high quality educational

alternatives such as distinctive programmes which are attractive to students of all races. Students enter in these schools on a voluntary basis. Interest and commitment to magnet schools is higher at the local level than what was anticipated. Parents, students and staff respond positively to magnet schools. Many American parents seek schooling for their children on the basis of religious rather than purely educational criteria. These parents are suspicious of the schools' practices and curriculum that might undermine their religious teachings and values. According to Halstead (1994:43), most parents send their children to private schools.

Parents choose to send their children to designated schools in their home districts, where acceptance is based on available space irrespective of the students' past academic or behaviour records.

(i) The voucher system for poor families

The voucher system has been established to help the needy parents with their children's education (Ogawa & Dutton 1997:333). The vouchers' amounts differ according to the parents' economic status. Poor families receive larger amounts to cater for all their children's educational expenses. For the effectiveness of this voucher system, parents are adequately informed by special assistance from counsellors in the interpretation of this system.

Low income parents are well cared for in the United States of America. *A private voucher model* has been introduced to enable low-income parents to place their children in private schools. Indianapolis is an example of a state which has such an Educational Choice Charitable Trust (Halstead 1994:46). Poor families' children educational costs are half paid by the Trust without academic or other requirements.

(ii) Home education

In the United States, parents have the right and the responsibility to choose to educate their children where they are taught best. Parents turn to the government not for direction but for help in meeting their common need to educate their children (Halstead 1994:49). Well to do parents in America decide to educate their children at home. The main reason for home education is that public schools are immoral and undisciplined. Families who prefer home education, according to Halstead (1994:48), have a common goal of deepening family bonds.

(iii) Parental satisfaction

Parents who are dissatisfied with their children's school work, have a right to select another school. Public schools' Parental Programmes, as agreed upon by Ogawa and Dutton (1997:335), help low-income families to send their children to private schools at the districts' expense, using the voucher

system. Educated parents in the United States of America are more likely to take advantage of the voucher and are actively engaged in choosing schools (Ogawa & Dutton 1997:336).

Educated parents have access to more information about schools and have to choose them than the less educated parents. Those parents who select their children's schools do so because of being attracted by the quality of certain schools and districts as reflected in academic performance and resource base. Being involved in school activities and having more opportunities to express parental concerns has enabled American parents to take advantages of choice opportunities (Ogawa & Dutton 1997:338).

4.3.3 Parent-teacher associations

The aim of parent-teacher associations is to empower parents for school improvement. In the state of Missouri, the Australian Journal of Early Childhood (1994:11), reports that Parents as Teachers Programme (PAT), has contributed in helping parents to teach their children to speak good English in an English-speaking world. PAT has been a significant innovation in parent education. Parents are given practical information on how to teach young children. PAT, according to the Australian Journal of Early Childhood (1994:11), affirms the philosophical view that parents are the first influential teachers of the child during the early years at home. The state of Missouri became the first state to mandate parent

education and family support which starts from the child's birth.

(i) Empowerment programmes

Empowerment programmes have motivated parents to exert influence for educational improvement. Principals and teachers elect council members who will keep record of all the functioning of the association. Principals, according to Goldring & Hausman (1997:25), try by all their means not to veto discussions taken by the councils, parents or, members of the council nor to dominate discussions. To avoid domination by any member in the council, the chairperson allows equitable input from all members. As parents are the closest to the students, they bring valuable perspectives to the table because parents understand their children's needs and are aware of the community's values and beliefs.

Parent-teacher associations have enabled parents in the United States of America to develop high interpersonal skills and they are facilitative leaders. Teachers and principals, as stated by Goldring and Hausman (1997:28), have refrained from using their formal authority to make decisions at the same time aiming at shared goals together with parents. Through group decisions new initiatives providing parents with more empowering experiences such as helping children with their school work, emerge.

Being given a reasonable way to get involved in school-related matters, parents in America want to be more empowered because empowerment creates meaningful motivational roles for parents. With empowered parents, new energies for school improvement move to the fore-front (Goldring & Hausman 1997:29). Considering parental involvement as traditional in America has encouraged parents to support children's learning at home which contributes to student success in schooling. Parental involvement according to Huss-Keeler and Rebecca (1997:171), enhances the children's positive attitudes towards schooling, literacy and learning abilities.

In parent-teacher-associations, teachers in turn view parents who participate in school-related matters as interested parents who are supportive of their children's learning both in and out of school. Difficulties are experienced from low income ethnic and linguistic minority parents. These parents have difficulties in communicating with teachers, mostly because they do not understand the school system and the parent-teacher roles (Huss-Keeler & Rebecca 1997:171).

Parent-teacher-associations open chances for parents to ask questions regarding their children's school performance and allow the teachers to answer the questions. Different states in America have different systems of education. Parents are always kept abreast of any changes and improvements in the education systems through parent-teacher organisations and associations (Bender 1997:40).

Kentucky is an example of a state where Standards-Based Reform has been introduced to parents through Parent-Teacher-Associations and Parent-Teacher-Organisations' workshops. These workshops reinforce the idea that schools cannot educate their children alone, parents are also responsible. Without the parents' participation in all workshops and organisations, teachers may not understand parents' expectations.

Parents are trained as facilitators to work directly in the schools on a part-time basis. Training parents as facilitators has enabled many parents to complain about curriculum which was specifically written for the district. When discussing the curricula, trained parents were capable of seeing that the curricula were long and repetitious (Bender 1997:41). Through parent-teacher associations and organised workshops, parents are capable of forming alliances to support parents who do not understand standards-based reform. Once the parents finish their workshops, celebrations are held and certificates are awarded.

4.3.4 Parental roles at school

A "parent" in the United States of America is any adult who takes primary responsibility in raising a child. To be successful in raising children and to avoid school dropout and low school achievement, parents need to be actively involved in all school activities. Karther and Loudon (1997:42), state that informal meetings with parents at the beginning of each

school year are called in America. The main objective of calling these meetings is to facilitate communication between parents and teachers which will help in formal family-school activities. Teachers provide description of their classrooms routines and expectations to help those parents who will volunteer in helping in the classroom situation (Karther & Loudon 1997:42).

Different schools choose from different types of parent involvement activities. Parents are given the chance to determine the type of parental involvement activity they prefer. "Saturday Schools" or "Family Fridays" where parents learn with their children, children have meals with their parents and their grandparents. At schools there are parent resource rooms where parents have to choose from a variety of teaching aids to use when volunteering at school (Karther & Loudon 1997:43).

A homework hotline or dial-a-teacher is arranged for parents who cannot attend meetings at school on a regular basis. According to Karther & Loudon (1997:43), student portfolios should be regularly reviewed to help parents in tracking their children's progress. Bulletin boards within the school grounds should be more informative with special displays to enable parents to get all the necessary information.

(i) Problems of low-income parents

The issue of transportation for the low-income parents impedes direct school involvement. In rural communities, as agreed upon by Karther and Loudon (1997:43), the lack of public transportation puts many hardships on family life. Parents with low literacy skills also add to parental problems experienced in rural communities. Teachers in America, take the responsibility of helping poor parents with the voucher system.

Parents with low literacy, low income, are helped by teachers to attend parental workshops on a regular basis. The aim is to help these parents in teaching their children at home and supervising their children's homework. Teachers have arranged literacy programmes for adults to enrol with the intent of increasing their ability to help their children with school work (Karther & Loudon 1997:42).

Parental evenings at school where parents are helped with the manner of improving their children's school work at home, have poor attendance because many parents come from work tired and need to relax (Huss-Keeler & Rebecca 1997:175). The home-school communication methods such as the homework hotline or dial-a-teacher have enabled the parents in America to come often to school at "Parents' Evenings" when parents and teachers meet to find out about the school curriculum and their children's progress. Curriculum meetings according to

Huss-Keeler (1997:174), are arranged, aiming at helping parents to get further explanation about what is to be introduced to their children in class.

Teacher contacts throughout the year facilitate co-ordination of information and effort between home and school. Regular conferences facilitate a balanced examination of all students' development including the provision of uninterrupted time and privacy for study purposes.

Inclusion of students in parent-teacher conferences as observed by Karther and Loudon (1997:43), helps the students to get clarity in learning needs, goals and responsibilities. Teachers who want to improve school work incorporate home activities and parent participation in their class plans. These teachers choose simple family activities that foster parent-child interaction whereby parents are provided with ideas for home learning activities. These learning activities are more motivating than homework assignments (Karther & Loudon 1997:43).

4.3.5 Parental roles at home

The primary purpose of getting parents assisting their children with their school work, is to improve the quality of education through parent-teacher participation. Home routines have been found useful in America to link the family to the school environment (Coleman & Churchill 1997:148). Children

who share preferred conditions for learning at home with their parents have good performance at school when compared to the minority who do not get help from parents at home.

Milgran and Perkins (1996:201), are of the opinion that the efficacy of homework behaviour will increase if youngsters do their homework in ways that match their preferred homework style. Teachers try their best in encouraging parents to develop an understanding of their children's homework style and to provide conditions that match the style.

Parents who cannot attend parent-teacher organisations because of their commitments, collect lesson cards from parents who had attended the meetings or conferences. If they fail to do so, they call the teachers concerned through the telephone and get all the useful information necessary for helping the children with their homework (Batey 1996:63).

Low income parents with less than a high school education have fewer contacts with their children's school than parents with more education. This lack of communication affects the children's homework because parents lack the information necessary to enable them in helping their children at home (Huss-Keeler & Rebecca 1997:172).

In many places, "Parent Evenings" were fruitful because parents used the methods they were advised to use in the "Parent Evenings". Many parents are capable of improving their

children's reading and writing skills through those methods (Huss-Keeler & Rebecca 1997:174).

Many children from the elite group live in large clean homes which are nicely furnished with modern televisions and videos. Parents from the above mentioned homes improve their children's reading and speaking skills through the television's educational programmes. Some parents hire or purchase cassettes to play in their video sets, helping in the improvement of their children's education. Huss-Keeler and Rebecca (1997:179), agree that children in America interact with family members at home in the similar ways as in school. They read books in English, thus improving their proficiency in reading and writing the language.

As far as Mathematics is concerned, parents have a difficulty in helping children. Some parents organise extra classes for Maths because they have no thorough grounding in Mathematics. Parents have to pay extra money for the extra classes organised for the benefit of their children. Coleman and Churchill (1997:147), reveal that, through child guidance received from parent-teacher unions and organisations, parents in America understand and implement information regarding child guidance at home with success. This success is revealed at school when children and teachers interact.

4.3.6 THE ROLE OF SOCIETY IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Different companies in America take the initiative of funding schools with their hands without being approached. An example of a company which donates large sums of money to low-income families is the *Golden Rule Insurance Company*. Initially, the above mentioned insurance company donated for five hundred low-income families (Halstead 1994:46).

The American Educational Trust has inspired many programmes in other cities to help in financing the children's education. Communities in the U.S.A have established projects which will help pupils in making better grades. One of these projects as stated by Batey (1996:59), is *Parents lifting up students* (PLUS).

Every six weeks, PLUS invites parents of students with a failing grade to attend improvement sermons with their children. Parents and children enter into a written agreement which is signed at the beginning of the project. Parents participate actively in learning subjects like study skills, individual learning styles, how to be successful in school and how parents can help.

After a period of six weeks, report cards are monitored and those who have upgraded from symbol F to D are invited to a party. Certificates are signed and awarded to students for their success. In this party, all types of families attend the

project PLUS to see what can happen when they pull together, forming bonds and learning as a team (Batey 1996:59).

Living further from the cities makes it different for other parents to visit schools. To help such parents, a project called *Parents and Teachers Connecting for Kids* has been established (Batey 1996:60). A bus company awarded R6000 to an elementary school to implement the above mentioned project. The donation is used to maintain and service school vehicles which pick up parents to visit schools. When special programmes are scheduled, the transport is available for all parents who wish to attend.

A parent-volunteer programme has been established and funded by different institutions to facilitate an organised effort. The parents aim at creating a volunteer handbook, covering school needs and job description. Centres to display materials on parenting are opened in the United States of America for parents to check out during the school years (Batey 1996:66).

Parents are invited to be volunteers in different school activities and projects. In all the above efforts, the Public Education Foundation is a strong community organisation in support of parental involvement in the United States of America. The funds obtained from different financial institutions have succeeded in increasing parent-educator interaction for the benefit of children's learning (Batey 1996:66).

(i) Overcoming violence in schools

In America, families do not function in isolation from the rest of the society. All the American citizens are dependent on the community for their existence (Batey 1996:70). Parents are free to voice their views for reform. When the problem of violence became the cause for concern in American schools, educators, parents and community members united in dealing with safety in the schools. The members of the American society volunteered to stop the violence.

Working together with the media has helped to educate the public about taking the initiative of controlling the violent situation in schools (Batey 1996:67). *Volunteering network* including educators, parents and students, has been formed. Students have to report other students who have weapons. Together, the community have become a voice for reform in public schools.

The mayor of Nashville has set an example of installing a toll-free telephone in each high school. The motive behind is to enable students to report anyone who has a weapon at school. Any caller whose information has led to the arrest of the culprits will be rewarded with R3500. In the hostel, lockers are searched any time according to the discretion of the community members (Batey 1996:75). If the student is found with a weapon, he/she is suspended for a year. The community is joining hands to stop violence for the education system not

to be hindered.

Radio and local television stations sponsor volunteer phone lines for community members who have questions or concerns as far as public schools' safety is concerned. The presence of extra adults in the public schools, as agreed upon by Batey (1996:75), reassured students and educators of safety. Community volunteering exposed the adults to see exactly what teachers face and tolerate on a daily basis.

(ii) Health and safety plan

The use of pesticides in America has affected the health of many school children. International Pest Management Institute conducts workshops to parents on how to use less toxic pesticides and use them only when necessary (Batey 1996:70). Advices on better maintenance of grounds, keeping food and water, especially in the hostels are given by IPMI. Nashville also has set an example of a project called BURNT (Bring Urban Recycling to Nashville Today).

BURNT according to Batey (1996:70), has started an urban pesticide use reduction campaign. Schools were targeted because children are at stake and need protection first. To minimize the health risks at schools, BURNT collected the research and presented it to the government officials responsible for children's health at schools. BURNT worked with school officials and employees to help design a safer and

more effective pest management programme to find good resources nationwide (Batey 1996:71).

4.4 Conclusion

Parents' dedication to what is prevailing at school, has enabled England and America to set an example in the field of education. The two countries' advantage, is the majority of literate citizens enjoying a high socio-economic status. The minority poor and illiterate group is always helped by the government and different financial institutions.

Team work on the part of the parents, teachers, the community members and students, has protected many American schools which are in danger of being destroyed by drugs and violence. Dedication on the part of the parents to be watchmen/women day and night in public schools has eased the tension on the side of the teachers who are always exposed to the dangers of violent students. The child's health is protected at all costs due to parents' solidarity.

Irrespective of how much an industry contributes towards the country's economy, if the children's health is at risk, parents and the community have to intervene. The parents' co-operation helps in the children's development because the latter know that they are protected in all spheres of life.

CHAPTER 5SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS5.1 SUMMARY

The first chapter of the study has revealed the aims of the research where the lack of parental involvement in the children's education has crippled the formal education system in the Transkei area. It was stated that the main reason for the existing breach between the school and the home is the prevailing illiteracy amongst parents especially in the remote rural areas. The factors contributing to the poor progress in rural schools have been discussed in this chapter. References to some of the appendices serve as subsidiaries to the facts discussed in chapter one.

In the second chapter, implications of parental involvement are discussed. Amongst these implications, the reasons for getting parents involved in their children's education is emphasised. Parents' rights, children's rights together with bodies regulating parental involvement have been brought into light. To supplement this fact, the educational laws of South Africa and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, concerning parental rights and their duties towards their children's schooling, have been discussed. Famous educators' views about parental involvement have been discussed in detail to show how important the involvement of parents towards the

education of their children is.

The third chapter introduced the difficulties experienced by teachers in dealing with parents as far as the school related matters are concerned. Traditional lifestyles versus formal education have been highlighted as the most significant contributory factors to the lack of parental involvement in the children's education. Data from the rural school principals who are chiefly exposed to the problem of non-parental involvement are discussed in this chapter.

In the fourth chapter, the researcher discusses the education systems of Britain and America which serve as examples as far as parental involvement in the children's education is concerned. The community's involvement in children's education has been discussed in this chapter. Different organisations and financial institutions have been put forth as examples in Britain and America as far as their contribution towards education is concerned. The consideration of poor families which receive special donations to finance their children's education has also been discussed in this chapter.

The governments of America and Britain have been discussed as good examples in decreasing the poverty by offering special financial aid to the needy in poverty stricken areas.

In the final chapter, the researcher gives recommendations regarded as essential in the upgrading of rural areas, especially in the eradication of illiteracy.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Introduction of ABET (Adult Basic Education) in rural areas.

All the rural areas in the Eastern Cape Region, of which Transkei forms part, need the introduction of ABET for illiterate parents. To ensure that parents in rural areas are educated and organised, well planned ABET programmes should be introduced. The above fact will ensure that all parents are educated and easily introduced to the formal schooling system (Gabriels:1998:3 (4):4-5).

5.2.2 Formation of parent-teacher associations.

Once parents understand their role as far as their children's education is concerned, parent-teacher associations can be successfully formed to enable teachers and parents to understand and know each other very well. In these associations, parents can be gradually introduced to the formal schooling system. Parents can be invited to school functions and recreations so that children feel the closeness of parents in their education. Children feel proud to see their parents being involved at school (Mannah 1999: 3 (1):4-5).

Children see the importance of schooling once their parents

visit the school frequently. Parents know their children better than anybody else. The parents can help in taking some load off teachers by helping children with their school work at home.

Vandalism, gangsterism and many illegal activities can be deterred by the parents' frequent presence at school. Many parents have talents which teachers do not possess. These talents can enhance school programmes and provide new opportunities for enrichment (Asmall 1999:3 (7):13).

Parents can volunteer, and by doing so, enhance understanding between the community and the school. Parents can be encouraged to learn to highlight their knowledge and bring valuable skills to school. Furthering parents' knowledge will help in sharing information on the curricula and how learning is organised. Literacy will bring mutual understanding and trust between teachers, parents and the community at large. Parents will soon understand why their involvement is necessary and welcome any invitations they get from the staff members.

To succeed in enabling parents to give a helping hand in the classroom, teachers need to workshop parents by clearly defining the roles to be played by parents. Gradually, parents will be interested in what is happening at school (Mannah 1999: 3 (1) 5).

Teachers should try by all means to communicate with parents as soon as the school year starts. All parents should be made to feel comfortable by considering cultural and language differences when communicating in parent-teacher meeting or any gathering involving the two parties.

During parents' day, class teachers should be able to identify parents who show signs of being valuable resources in the field of education. These parents should be invited into classes when teachers are teaching. Thereafter the resourceful parents can help teachers in conducting workshops where inactive parents can be helped by clearly defining the role to play within the school situation. Whenever there are new parents, experienced parents should be used to share their ideas with the new ones.

The moment parents offer their help to the school is the moment whereby the improvement and upgrading of schools can be in the hands of involved parties. Parents in rural areas can be the ones to detect the school requirements and how the school system should function.

5.2.3 PARENT-TEACHER-PUPIL ASSOCIATIONS

For education to be successful, parents, teachers and pupils have to work together. To promote such team work, parent-teacher-pupil associations should be formed. In these associations, the three parties should plan all the

educational needs in accordance with the needs of the society.

When children are on outings, excursions, tours to art galleries, zoos and museums, parents should always accompany the children to ease the burden of the teachers. In parent-teacher-pupil associations, educational and wild life programmes should be prepared so as to supplement formal education in class (Mannah 1999: 3 (1): 5).

Parents need not be scholars or teachers to know the school requirements. The needs of the school can be discussed by the three parties and decide on what can be afforded, or parents can be requested to contribute financially towards the upgrading and the development of the school.

If parents are not included in the educational plans, a vital element will be missed in the children's education. The missed ingredient, being parents, will cause a decline in the standards and quality of children's education. Parents must have a will and imagination to prepare children to function intelligently within society.

The success of education rests on the relationship between parents, teachers and pupils. Hard work, respect for teachers including all members of the society and heavy parental involvement in the educational progress can engender positive results in the children's education.

5.2.4 IMPROVEMENT AND UPGRADING OF RURAL SCHOOLS.

The dilapidated condition of many rural schools is a cause for concern (see appendix 4 p149). Many rural schools lack basics such as toilets and running water, therefore the education department in liaison with the parents and teachers should strive towards supplying the basic needs.

The government should stop terminating cleaning contracts with certain companies in schools where the cleaning services are a necessity. This termination of cleaning companies has led to unhygienic conditions at several schools.

In order to maintain the physical infrastructure of the schools, the education department should use the local members of the society as caretakers after school and during the holidays. If the above fact cannot be obtained, security services should be rendered for the safety of the school and the teaching equipments inside (Mannah 1999: 3 (1): 5).

Being in a disadvantaged area in the Eastern Cape Province, schools in the Eastern Cape Department of Education need to be built, renovated, fenced and supplied with all the teaching requirements to be used in the new system of education. The Education Department must undertake research by consulting parents first before implementing any changes within the education system. Implementing changes randomly is devastating to the poor and the disadvantaged areas (Asmall 1999:3

(7):13).

5.2.4.1 PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURES.

Besides being dilapidated, schools in the former Transkei have been destroyed by tornadoes. Some classes are attended in the open air because parents are not involving themselves in speeding up the process of rebuilding the schools. As a result the Education Department takes time to respond to the problems of such schools (SADTU report in the fourth international conference 1998: 2 (7):16).

Authorities in the Education Department should go to a tornado stricken area to see how they can help with accommodation for the sake of progress in the learning situation.

Improved methods and approaches in the education system are of vital importance. For these approaches and methods to be successful, well structured classrooms suitable for educating future citizens should be built by the Department of Education working hand in hand with the parents and the community at large (Gabriels 1998:2 (8):8-9).

Libraries and laboratories cannot be run in dilapidated buildings and old rondavels as is the case with many rural schools in the Transkei region. The bad situation in rural schools should be improved by encouraging parents to participate in all plans pertaining the development of the

school, irrespective of being illiterate.

Equality should be strived for, that is, educational equipment should be equally distributed to all the provinces. However, the most disadvantaged provinces should be financed more than the advantaged ones. Rural schools should be brought to an equal footing with urban schools (Cruickshank 1996:1 (4):15).

Electricity and water supplies should be regarded as priority in the rural schools for health purposes and for teaching subjects such as science, geography, home economics, computer studies etc. (Cruickshank 1996:1 (4):15).

5.2.4.2 ADVICE TO PARENTS.

Many pupils attend senior secondary education and tertiary education far from home. Parents do not know how regularly the pupil attends nor the pupil's punctuality.

Parents should purchase all the school's requirements on time, to avoid delays on the side of the teachers. Parents should set time aside for studies at home and make sure that they supervise their children's studies.

During school holidays, parents should organise group work where pupils of the same standard are grouped together to revise the previous quarter's work. In remote rural areas televisions are not yet available, so parents can help

children in listening to educational programmes which are broadcast through the radio (Geyer 1999: 3 (1):2-4).

If the parents discover that their children are performing poorly in certain subjects, they should arrange extra classes with teachers who excel in the poorly performed learning areas. This fact can be achieved only if parents consult their children's teachers regularly. During such consultations, parents can advise their children concerning the selection of subjects whilst teachers offer a helping hand.

Parents must not leave their children in the care of the family members or housekeepers for a long time because the latter cannot give the attention which a parent can to his/her child. Parents must not give their children household chores during school and study hours. This is typical of parents in the rural areas and those parents with businesses.

5.2.4.3 THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

The Department of Education should consult with the parents on a regular basis. The parents should be allowed to voice their views concerning the urgent needs of the school.

A Regional help desk which will facilitate co-operation between the department and the schools should be set up. This help desk should try to respond immediately to urgent school

problems. The information supplied by the community about their schools should be used by the government to foresee problems around the field of education (Naidoo 19983: 2 (3):13).

The Department of Education should refrain from prescribing what must be done at schools, but it must collaborate with the schools and the community first, so as to solve the problems. Action research should be used by the education authorities to improve the performance in schools. By doing this research, the education authorities will try out ideas in action, understand these actions and try to make changes and improvements in the classroom (Cruickshank 1996:1 (4):15).

Schools in rural areas are having problems which need timeous delivery of resources because teachers cannot do their work properly without resources. Changes in the education system should be introduced gradually, being backed by advanced training of personnel to deal with such changes. Regular inservice courses should be conducted to familiarise teachers with intended changes (Teachers' Column 1999: 3 (4):2).

5.3 CONCLUSION

To reach the desired standard of education in the next millennium, the government together with the parents are expected to take drastic steps in rectifying the situation in the poor and impoverished provinces like the Eastern Cape Province. Parents in rural areas should always be contacted whenever the government plans to change the system of education.

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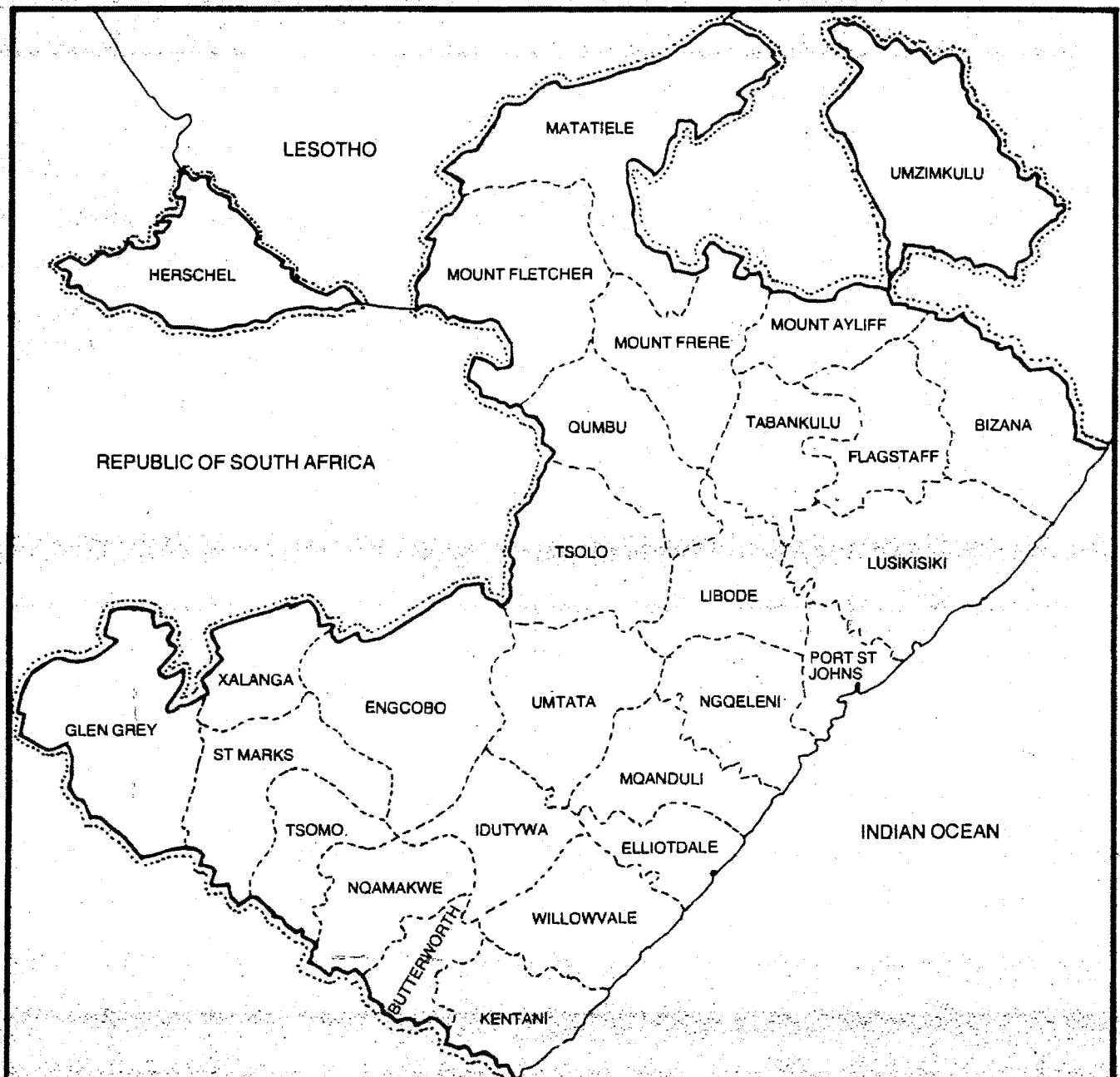
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APPENDIX 1



Republic of Transkei

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Colleague

As an Med student at the University of South Africa, my topic of research is chiefly concerned with black parental involvement in the primary and secondary educational situation. Kindly supply the required information by responding with "yes" or "no" to the questions appearing on the following page. If you have some comments concerning the effectiveness of parent teacher associations and parental involvement, write them on the space provided on the last page of this questionnaire.

PUT "YES" OR "NO" ON THE SPACES PROVIDED.

1. Do you have a parent-teacher association?
2. Do you have a PTSA?
3. Do parents attend PTSA meetings?
4. If so, is the attendance at hte meetings good or bad?
5. Do parents voice out their views in these meetings?
6. How often do you call parents meetings?
7. Do parents help in repairing school buildings and equipments?
8. Do they maintain the school grounds?
9. Are they interested in sport?
10. If so, do they help by coaching pupils?
11. Do they supervise their children's study at home?
12. Do they help their children with their homework?
13. Was the community involved in selecting the curriculum?
14. How is the school attendance?
15. Do parents raise funds to defray school expenditure?
16. Do parents accompany pupils on educational tours?

[illegible]

(ii)

COMMENTS ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:

[illegible]

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PARENTS

Parent

As an Med student at the University of South Africa, my topic of research is concerned with the black parental involvement in the primary and secondary educational situation. Seeing that parental involvement is lacking especially in the Transkei region, kindly supply the required information by responding with "yes" or "no" to the questions appearing on this page. If you have comments write them on the last page of this questionnaire.

(i)

PUT "YES" OR "NO" ON THE SPACES PROVIDED.

1. Do you attend parents meetings?
2. Do you voice out your views in these meetings?
3. Were you involved in choosing the school curriculum?
4. Do you know your children's class teachers?
5. Have you ever visited the classes during the normal teaching time?
6. Do you help your children with their homework?
7. How do you contribute towards the building of schools in rural areas?
8. Are you interested in sport?
9. If so , do you help teachers by coaching pupils?
10. Do you accompany pupils on educational tours?

COMMENTS ON HOW PARENTS VIEW THE SITUATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS

This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of ten horizontal rows, each defined by two parallel dashed lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the entire width of the page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. There is no text or other markings on the page.

APPENDIX 4



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APPENDIX 5



MP calls for upgrading of Mount Ayliff schools

Daily Dispatch Reporter

EAST LONDON — A national ANC MP, Mr Geoff Doidge, has challenged the National Education Ministry and the Eastern Cape Education and Culture Ministry to "take action" to improve conditions of schools in a Mount Ayliff rural village.

Mr Doidge, who was allocated Mount Ayliff, Kokstad and Mount Fletcher as his constituencies by the ANC in Parliament, complained about overcrowding at Dutyini school, which has a pre-school, a primary and a secondary level.

He said there were only 13 teachers for 610 pupils at junior secondary level and there was no water supply or furniture for the school.

Mr Doidge said in responding to his questions in Parliament, the claim by the Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, that the average pupil-teacher ratio at the school was 48:1, was aimed at hiding the reality of overcrowding at the school.

Mr Doidge said his

counts in some classes were 164:1, 95:1 and 137:1.

In Std 1 and Std 2, the ratios were 64:1 and 75:1 respectively, while at junior secondary level the ratio was 47:1.

The 100-year-old school was built from wattle and daub, had no partitions between classrooms of the junior secondary school, and had mud floors. One of the rondavel classrooms had no roof, as its thatch had blown away.

In a written reply, the Eastern Cape Department of Education and Culture told Mr Doidge that the pre-school had no toilets and children used facilities of the primary and junior secondary schools. There were 12 pit latrines at the school which required maintenance.

However, Mr Doidge said the toilets were not fit for human use and challenged the national and provincial education authorities to take action to rectify the situation.

The department said the primary and junior secondary classes had no furniture of their

own, but they were borrowing from the pre-school and neighbouring schools. The pre-school's 170 pupils shared only 40 desks.

The department said it was addressing the staff shortage at the schools "within its financial constraints".

"I want action taken because there is no water supply at the school — the water supply installed by the previous government has never functioned. I ask where the state departments have been all these years," Mr Doidge said.

He said five pupils used one desk which was designed for two pupils in the primary and junior secondary classes, while in Sub B, the pupils were sitting on church benches turned on their sides.

Mr Doidge said the pre-school, which was maintained by the community and the local Methodist church, was "exceptionally" well-maintained and beautifully decorated, while the state buildings were "fit for pig-sties".

Qunu pre-school in traits – co-ordinator

By Kerry Engelbrecht

UMTATA — Concerned Qunu pre-school co-ordinator Victoria Zidlele has expressed her disapproval at a statement by Eastern Cape Education MEC Stone Sizani that the department could not provide children under seven with learning material.

She said pre-school was not only vital as an education foundation, but also ensured thousands of children from poor homes were fed and healthy.

"Just because we are in the district of Madiba's hometown, people think we don't need anything, even though there are eight pre-schools in the Qunu district and some are still in huts," said Zidlele.

Using Elukhanyisweni Pre-School in the Qunu district as an example, Zidlele said that although there had never been less than 40 pupils each year since the school was started in 1995, the school had received no financial help from the government.

Zidlele is sending applications for sponsorship to companies and organisations.

A R20 fee collected from pupils every month is the only money available for running the school, and after stationery and other basic costs, the two fully trained teachers take home a pay cheque of only R80 each.

These teachers double up as cleaners and anything else required of them to keep the school



DEPRIVED: Pupils of Elukhanyisweni Pre-School in Qunu lack even basic facilities.

Picture by KERRY ENGELBRECHT

going.

This pre-school faces the same crisis as schools in many rural areas in terms

of resources. A mud floor is visible through the tattered, plastic floor tiles; there are no books and

other learning materials apart from a few posters made by the teachers using crumpled paper.

There are no toilets nor a feeding scheme.

Pupils sit on the floor as there is no furniture, and in winter Zidlele said attendance drops dramatically as it is simply too cold in their makeshift classroom.

According to Zidlele, a few mothers volunteered to cook porridge for the pupils when the school first opened but a lack of funds prevented this from continuing.

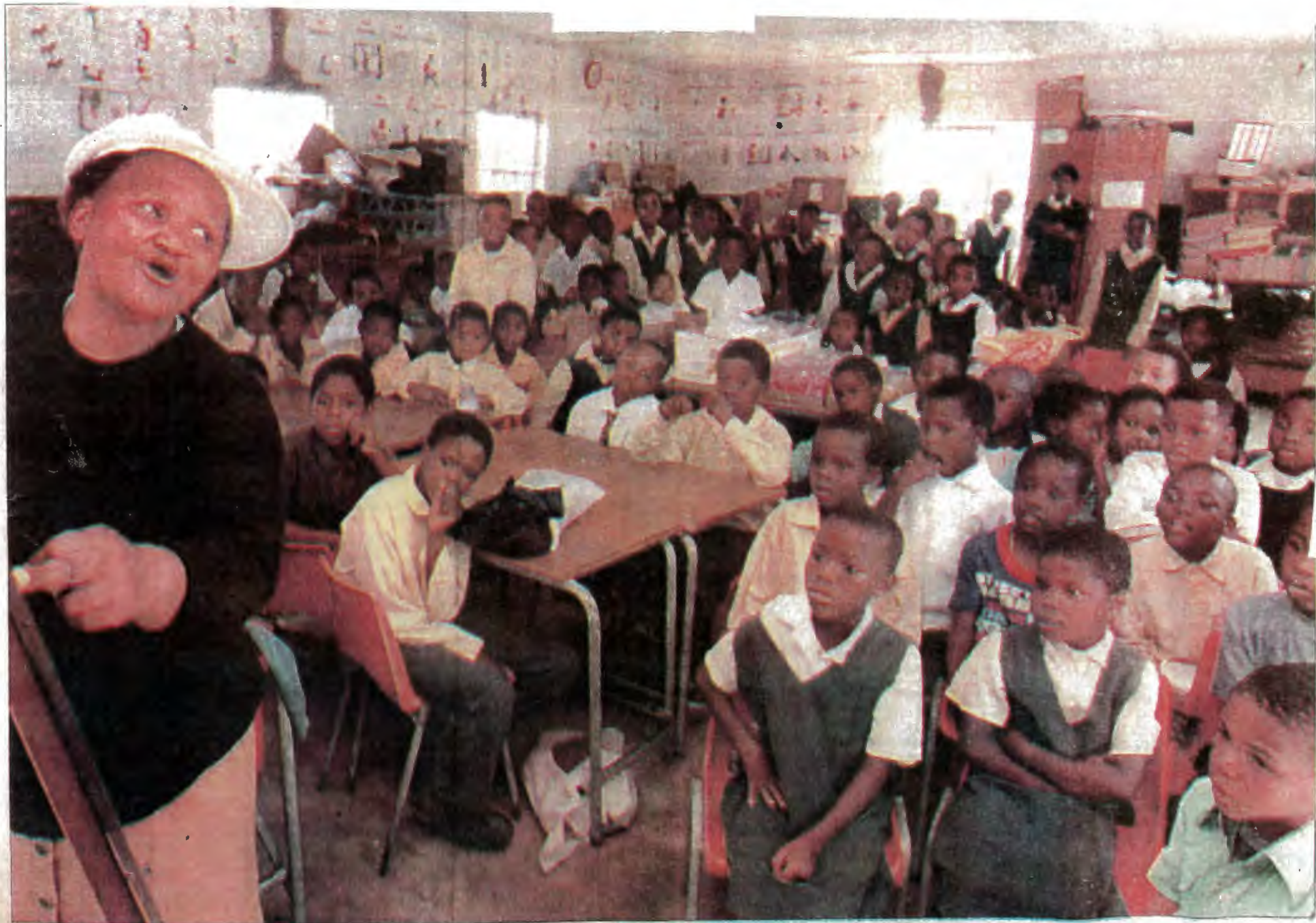
In addition, a graduation is necessary if the pre-schoolers are to be admitted to the nearby Qunu Junior Secondary School, and the cost of the graduation gowns is about R60 per child.

Elukhanyisweni has tried to raise some funds by hiring out these gowns to other pre-schools at graduation time, but many have failed to pay.

Although much is needed to suitably equip Elukhanyisweni Pre-School, one of the primary causes for concern is health.

One child, aged six, has received no treatment for the unsightly sores on her head and according to Zidlele most of the pupils have ringworm.

Although the Qunu clinic is close by, Zidlele said there are very seldom medicines available and she made an urgent plea for anyone who could assist in providing the pre-school with a first-aid kit.



OVERCROWDED: Mrs Mary-Jane Siwayi tries to teach her courses in the single classroom at the Cintsu East Township school. Over 100 primary school pupils in different grades share the same room at this rural school.

APPENDIX 8

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78 pc of EC children live in poverty – study

By Nick Wilson

EAST LONDON — The Eastern Cape has the largest percentage of poverty-stricken children in South Africa.

This was revealed in the 1999 Idasa publication: *Where Poverty Hits Hardest: Children and the Budget in South Africa*.

According to the publication, 78 percent of children younger than 18 years in the Eastern Cape live in poor households, compared with 35 percent in the Western Cape and 20 percent in Gauteng.

The publication, which is co-authored by Shirley Robinson and Mastoera Sadan, analyses the impact of government spending on child poverty in South Africa.

It focuses on health, education, welfare and criminal justice and examines policy priorities, measures of equity and access, specific programmes and their impact on children's lives.

The Eastern Cape is followed closely by the Free State with 73 percent of its children living in

poor households and the North West Province with 68 percent.

The book, which uses statistics from the 1997 Department of Education School Register of Needs, also reveals that the Eastern Cape has the highest shortage of classrooms in the country.

The province has a shortage of 15 538 classrooms, while the Western Cape only has a shortage of 926.

Gauteng similarly has less need, having a shortage of 2 332.

Other provinces with high classroom shortages are Kwazulu-Natal with a shortage of 14 534 and the Northern Province with a shortage of 13 670.

The Eastern Cape and Northern Province also lag behind in terms of access to teachers.

According to the publication, the disparities in access to teachers and classrooms show that children living in the largely rural Eastern Cape and Northern Province "fare poorly" compared with children in Gauteng.

Furthermore, fewer than 20 percent of schools in the Eastern Cape have access to telephones or elec-

tricity compared with almost 90 percent of schools in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

Turning to health services, the book also points out that the proportion of children who are fully immunised against infectious diseases is one of the measures of children's access to basic health services.

According to a survey conducted in 1994, three quarters of all children in South Africa aged 12 to 23 months were fully immunised, which is high immunisation coverage by international standards.

However, provincial immunisation rates indicate that just over half of all children in the Eastern Cape are immunised, compared with over 85 percent of all children in Gauteng.

The publication says children in poorer provinces like the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province have inadequate access to primary health care facilities and face lower availability of doctors, nurses, dentists and pharmacists, in comparison with children in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

APPENDIX 12

